

KOREAN CINEMA TODAY

MAY 2018 | Vol.31

New Big Projects

6 Korean
Directors
of 2018

COVER
BURNING

SPECIAL INTERVIEW

OH Seok Geun
Chairperson of KOFIC

INTERVIEW

KIM Tae-seong
Composer

LEE Jae-sung
Production Designer

Korea's Finest Storytellers

LEE Chang-dong
YOON Jong-bin



Korean Film Council
www.koreanfilm.or.kr

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BIFF Leaps into Stabilization

LEE Yong-kwan and Jay JEON
Returns as Festival Chairman and Director



LEE Yong-kwan



Jay JEON

A new team of leaders will be spearheading the 2018 Busan International Film Festival (BIFF). After ex-chairman KIM Dong-ho and ex-festival director KANG Soo-young stepped down following the October festival last year, BIFF was without a leader for 3 months. The successors are familiar faces. On January 31, BIFF board members held an extraordinary general meeting and decided on previous festival director LEE Yong-kwan to be appointed as the chairman. In turn, Jay JEON who was previously the deputy director has been appointed as the new festival director. Both individuals are members of the festival since it first started in 1996. They were dismissed from their positions in 2016 due to the controversy surrounding the screening of *The Truth Shall Not Sink with Sewol*.

A BIFF personnel quoted, "Including the inspector, 17 board members and 4 executive committee members were in attendance for a total of 21 individuals who voted to appoint the new chairman and the festival director. Chairman LEE Yong-kwan especially took an overwhelming lead." Chairman LEE Yong-kwan was a professor in the Department of Theater and Film at the Kyungsung University in 1996 when he got involved with the 1st BIFF as senior programmer. Then, he became deputy director and festival director. He's currently the dean of Im Kwon Taek College of Film and Media Arts at Dongseo University. Jay JEON was the Director of Asian Film Market and then its deputy director. Their terms are 4 years and 3 years respectively.

With the return of the two leaders, BIFF will take steps to normalize business operations. Ever since the *The Truth Shall Not Sink with Sewol* incident, many filmmakers announced their boycott against BIFF. This is because they believed that PARK Geun-hye's administration forced the chairman out from the festival for screening a movie about the Sewol Ferry. In 2016, 150 international film industry professionals participated in a campaign for the independence of BIFF at the Berlin International Film Festival.

The 23rd BIFF with new chairman LEE Yong-kwan and festival director Jay JEON will be held from October 4th until the 13th.

by SHIM Eun-ha | Photographed by SON Hong-joo

The Era of VR Cinema Is Here



At the Preview of the VR Film *Stay with Me* in CGV 4DX on March 22nd.

The era has come where we can watch VR movies in theaters. Following Lotte Cinema's "Special VR Screening Series", CGV has released exclusively a VR melodrama *Stay with Me*. It is highly symbolic that the two major multiplex chains, which are leading the Korean theater industry, have screened VR movies in succession. Instead of small sized VR-specific theaters, if theater chains jump into the VR industry with more capital and better facilities, it's highly likely that it'll develop into an industry that will bring people of all gender and ages together.

Lotte Cinema held a special screening series for a month until February 14, where they screened nine VR movies including *Nine Days* (Director Patrick KWON). *Nine Days* is produced by Dashy Films, who received support from the Korean Film Council. It's the title that was nominated for the Best Narrative Film category at the VR FEST in Los Angeles.

Stay with Me, which was released in late March, is the first "4DX + VR" movie. CJ CGV aims to develop and sell the CGV 4D PLEX system to the 500 4DX movie theaters worldwide. Youth melodrama and VR movie *Stay with Me* was produced by KWAK Kyung-taek and directed by KOO Beom-seok who previously directed *Bohwagak*. It's interesting to note that they selected a romance film instead of an adventure, action, or horror film. In addition, many took notice that it's a well-produced dramatic film that's 38 minutes long, unlike short and experimental contents that were covered by VR filmmaking before. *Stay with Me* will be introduced to the worldwide film industry at this year's Cannes Market in the NEXT program's VR Theater section.

by SHIM Eun-ha

TRAIN TO BUSAN's VR Experience Exhibition Goes to Asia

YEON Sang-ho's zombie thriller *TRAIN TO BUSAN* (2016) will have its VR version. Singapore-based mm2 Asia announced that it will remake the zombie flick into a virtual-reality immersive experience exhibition that will tour throughout Asia later this year. According to The Hollywood Reporter, this tour will be a large exhibition as its production and staging cost are expected to reach USD 45 million. "The VR Experience tour is set to visit multiple destinations including Southern China and the coastal Chinese cities, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, and hopefully return to South Korea, the film's home country." mm2 Asia's CEO CHANG Long Jong said. Except for China, *TRAIN TO BUSAN* was a phenomenon in all of the above countries. It was the top-grossing Korean film in Singapore, as well as the top-grossing Asian film in Malaysia and Hong Kong. "You can play a character in the movie and be surrounded by zombies," CHANG said of the VR experience. "It will be thrilling. It is really something we believe the audience will enjoy." 

by SONG Soon-jin (Film Journalist)

TRAIN TO BUSAN



2018 KAFA Films Now on the KoBiz Online Screening Service

Films by students of the Korean Academy of Film Arts (KAFA) are currently available online. Last year, through a collaboration with Busan International Film Festival (BIFF), the online screening platform offered 33 films from the festival's selection. This year, The Korean Film Council (KOFIC) unveils 16 excellent films selected by KAFA on its official website (screening.koreanfilm.or.kr).

The lineup was mainly made based on supported entries by KAFA for the 16th Mise-en-Scène Short Film Festival (MSFF): KIM Dong-hyo's *Bully*, KIM Min-ju's *Angry Girl* and *KIM Heesun*, KIM Se-in's *Playing with Fire* as well as *Container*, SON Kyeong-su's *BETTA* and *The Hitchhiker*, LEE Seung-hyun's *Remnants*, LEE Je-hui's *Insulting Days* and *For Money*, OH Jung-min's *CUT* and *Coming of Age*, KIM So-youn's *Someone Else's*, Salomé DUBOIS' *Matriochka*, JANG Man-min's *Hysteria* and HONG Seong-eun's *Good Father*. Among them, four films (*KIM Heesun*, *Container*, *Coming of Age* and *Hysteria*) will be screened at this year's Jeonju International Film Festival (JIFF). The KoBiz Online Screening Service has been designed to promote Korean Films to overseas film programmers and buyers without additional cost.

by SONG Soon-jin (Film Journalist)



Container

Hysteria



KOFIC Hosted Korean Film Night in Berlin



KOFIC hosted its 'Korean Film Night' event during the 68th Berlin International Film Festival at the Korean Culture Center in Berlin at 8pm on Monday, February 19. The ceremony began with a brief collection of film clips from the Korean films invited to this year's edition, each of which were met with applause.

Among the main Korean guests at the event were director KIM Ki-duk and actors Mina FUIII and LEE Sung-jae from the film *Human, Space, Time and Human*, invited to this year's 'Panorama Special' program, SHIN Dong-seok and SUNG You-bin, the director and the star of 'Forum' invitee *Last Child* (2017), and several domestic festival chairpersons. Among foreign guests in attendance were Christoph Terhechte, head of the Forum program at the Berlin International Film Festival, programmer Benjamin Ilos of the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes Film Festival, Alberto Barbera, director of the Venice International Film Festival, Carlo Chatrian, artistic director of the Locarno International Film Festival and representatives from the Sitges International Fantastic Film Festival, BFI London Film Festival, Singapore International Film Festival and San Sebastian International Film Festival, among many others. Furthermore, the Korean Film Council operated a Korean Film Center booth during the European Film Market (EFM), which took place from February 14-23.

by Pierce Conran

KOFIC Releases "STATUS & INSIGHT" 2017 Report on Korean Film Industry

The Korean Film Council (KOFIC – Chairperson, OH Seok Geun) released its annual white paper on February 12. The 110-page publication, which is compiled by KOFIC's Film Policy Research Institute provides an in-depth analysis of the current state of the domestic film industry. The report covers topics such as box office returns, domestic distribution, the performance of Korean content in the IPTV and VOD market, overseas sales of Korean films, the Korean theater and multiplex market and gender representation in the Korean film industry. The report also includes an industry-wide breakdown of production and marketing costs versus profit returns for Korean releases. The English version of the report also includes descriptions of all Korean films that received theatrical releases or festival invitations over the course of the year.

According to the report, admissions for local films experienced a slight decrease of 2.7% but overall total theater admissions increased 1.3% from the year before to a record breaking 219.87 million. In the auxiliary distribution market, IPTV and digital cable TV grew 5.7% from the previous year, recording sales of KRW 436.2 billion (USD 407 million), while the Internet VOD market grew 10.7%. Meanwhile, sales of local films abroad for 2017 were USD 118.8 million, an increase of 17.5% from the previous year.

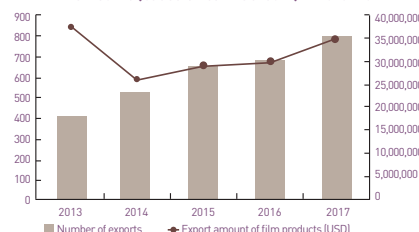
This report will be available from May on the Korean Film Biz Zone (KoBiz) website (<http://www.koreanfilm.or.kr>).

by Christopher Weatherspoon



2017 Korean Film Industry Report "STATUS & INSIGHT"

Figure 12 • Number of exported Korean film products • export amounts (based on contract sum) in 2013–2017



KOFIC's New Building

Design expected by August 2018,
Completion by September 2020

A Bird's Eye View of the KOFIC's New Building.



KOFIC has begun planning for its new building. KOFIC held a briefing session at its current office at Dongseo University, Busan on February 7 to discuss the design of the new building with executives and employees. KOFIC's new building will be located between the Busan Cinema Center and the Busan Cultural Content Complex. It will be five stories with an additional level below ground and will include basement garage, film archives and standard projection rooms on the first and second floor and work places from the third through fifth floors. KOFIC plans to finalize the building's architectural design by the end of August and has targeted September 2020 as the structure's completion date.

"KOFIC's new building is expected to be the face of KOFIC for Korean films to the world, beyond Asia," Chairperson OH said.

by SONG Soon-jin (Film Journalist)

I Will Be
on the Same Page
as the Film Industry

OH Seok Geun

Chairperson of the Korean Film Council

When the nomination of OH Seok Geun as the new chairperson of Korean Film Council (KOFIC) was announced three months ago, everyone agreed that he was fitting for the role due to his experience on the set (as a film director) and in administration (Busan Film Commission). This is also why many people were far from apprehensive and instead anticipated the start of his tenure despite the many pending issues awaiting the new chairperson, such as the blacklist scandal. We met with Chairperson OH Seok Geun to hear about his vision for the organization as he takes the mound to heal KOFIC during the next three years.

On April 4th, the organization apologized to the citizens and filmmakers for reducing financial support for independent films and the Busan International Film Festival after they were added to the blacklist created by the previous government. Why did you decide to make an apology at your very first official appearance?

The blacklist scandal has been an open secret in the film industry for a while. It was a problem everyone could feel, and everyone was exhausted by it. That's why I thought we shouldn't delay the apology any longer. If we do not apologize for the past, we cannot move forward. We're trying to organize a gathering to discuss future programs for those who were wronged by the blacklist. Once we decide on a program together, we'll start preparing it in May in order to reflect the changes in next year's budget.

As a result, the "Special Truth Commission for the Investigation of Past Affairs and Reform" (later: Special Committee) that recently started meeting will become important.

An internal probe by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism's committee, special prosecutors and the Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea, are conducting an investigation on artist blacklisting. If there is any need to clarify the facts and to take responsibility, we will follow the necessary procedures. More importantly, we should admit our mistakes and adopt new policies to prevent the same thing from happening again. Through the Special Committee, we will thoroughly disclose what happened to the organization and spell it out in black and white.

The organization went through restructuring. What was on your mind while preparing the changes?

The biggest problem was getting our employees to enjoy their jobs again. I think we were all fundamentally asking, "who are we?" and "are we civil servants or filmmakers?" Most of our employees joined the team because they love films. I had the feeling that they were proud of their jobs. However, their prides have been hurt. KOFIC is an organization that works hand-in-hand with Korean filmmakers, but we were unable to work. I understood it was the first thing I had to build back as the new chairperson.

KOFIC also announced the results of its "future plans task force". The ideas seem promising and it looks like KOFIC is becoming true again to its role. Notably, film policy research is back on the agenda after nine years.

I think there are two main roles for KOFIC. One is to think about, develop and present policies that are needed by the film industry. Another is being the mediator who creates a fair environment. I think these are the purposes for KOFIC's existence. During my term as the chairperson, I plan on focusing on film policy research.

There is a plan to found an Asian Film Promotion Agency (AFPA). Where did this idea come from?

What do international businesses and the foreign market mean to us? What about France, USA, South America and China? What do they mean to us? I believe it's important how we approach each country in respect to building our international businesses. Out of them all, the

Asian countries are most welcoming to Korean films. They have the desire to interact with Korean films and Korean filmmakers. We also share the same cultural values. That's why I believe we can share many resources including exchanging talents, making co-productions, and providing filmmaking training.

I heard you met with 11 countries from Asia at the Hong Kong Filmart, including Vietnam and Singapore. Did you meet them to discuss the Asian Film Promotion Agency?

I decided it is important to inform the international film industry and national agencies about the changes made within KOFIC. I also took this opportunity to inform them of my purposes and objectives for creating the Asian Film Promotion Agency. The national promotional agencies I met agreed that solidarity was necessary, especially cultural and talent exchanges. The Philippines and Singapore were enthusiastic about coming on board.

It's a large-scale project you're planning. Will we get to see some results this year?

That's our plan. I intend to travel to Beijing in mid-April to meet with the government personnel there and discuss the matter.

There was an announcement that KOFIC will start a production guarantee fund for Korean films.

Guarantee systems for content (including films) that are run by other institutions usually operate the same way as a loan, so many projects find themselves limited while raising funds. We're looking into introducing a guarantee policy that's investment-based and is more fitting with the current industry system. Once the research is finished and we secure enough budget to run the system, we will plan to start a production guarantee fund. If this system is found to be successful, the unfair trading practices currently going on between the big and small businesses will also improve, and the audiences will be able to find more diverse films in theaters and online.

Please tell us how you intend to serve during your three-year term.

From now on, KOFIC will be on the same page as the Korean film industry. We'll share everything with the filmmakers. 

by KIM Seong-hoon (Film Journalist) | photographed by BAEK Jong-heon

*Keys to the Heart*

1st Quarter Report

A Triumph for Diversity Films

The Korean box office ended on a bang last year when December delivered by far the best results for Korean and overall sales for the month since records began. Some of that momentum carried through into the early weeks of 2018, but the first quarter of the year has been one of highs and lows, as a strong January was followed by a disappointing Lunar New Year holiday season in February, while March brought with it surprising good fortune for homegrown mid-level releases. Even though the bigger local releases of the period suffered, several

homegrown titles came in above expectations, giving Korean cinema its best Q1 since the record of 2013. Conversely, Hollywood films that have met with success elsewhere experienced slow returns in the Korean market, giving US titles their lowest level of attendance since 2013. Overall, 51.3 million admissions were recorded during the first three months of the year, marginally down from the 52.23 million sales recorded last year, but ahead of both 2015 and 2016. The Korean share of that total jumped from 50% to 57% as local titles accumulated

an impressive 28.97 million entries. Hollywood titles, with a 34% share, saw their returns slow 6.5% year-on-year, to record 19.18 million admissions in total. Over the first 13 weekends of the year, Korean films claimed first place nine times.

In an encouraging sign to those concerned with the diminishing diversity of Korea's mainstream industry, the first local hits of 2018 were by-and-large modestly budgeted productions, with melodrama in particular making a return to form by claiming three spots in the top ten.



Black Panther

Top 10 Korean Box Office (as of April 16)

	Title	Release Date	Country	Distribution	Admissions
1	Along with the Gods: The Two Worlds	Dec. 20, 2017	Korea	Lotte Entertainment	5.87 mil (Total 14.41 mil)
2	Black Panther	Feb. 14, 2018	USA	Walt Disney Company	5.39 mil
3	1987: When the Day Comes	Dec. 27, 2017	Korea	CJ Entertainment	5.29 mil (Total 7.23 mil)
4	Coco	Jan. 11, 2018	USA	Walt Disney Company	3.51 mil
5	Keys to the Heart	Jan. 17, 2018	Korea	CJ Entertainment	3.42 mil
6	Detective K: Secret of the Living Dead	Feb. 08, 2018	Korea	Showbox	2.44 mil
7	Maze Runner: The Death Cure	Jan. 17, 2018	USA	20th Century Fox	2.30 mil
8	Be With You	Mar. 14, 2018	Korea	Lotte Entertainment	2.23 mil
9	Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle	Jan. 03, 2018	USA	Sony Pictures	1.71 mil
10	Little Forest	Feb. 28, 2018	Korea	Megabox Plus M	1.49 mil

Meanwhile, the two most expensive Korean films released in the year to date ended their runs far below their break-even points.

Holdovers and family titles deliver in early 2018

The year 2018 began as the showdown continued between two December titans, the fantasy epic *Along with the Gods: The Two Worlds* and the political drama *1987: When the Day Comes*. The former claimed the first weekend of the year during its third week of release while the latter was close behind in second during its sophomore frame. The films switched places the following week and *Along with the Gods* ultimately welcomed 5.87 million viewers in 2018, making it the top-performing title of the quarter. Adding that number to its 2017 receipts gives it 14.41 million viewers, the second highest ever total

for a Korean film. *1987* claims third place on the quarterly chart with 5.29 million admissions. Overall, the film has welcomed 7.23 million viewers. Franchise finale *Maze Runner: The Death Cure* was the next film to top the box office, when it beat new local melodrama *Keys to the Heart*. However, the Hollywood tentpole quickly faded and it was the Korean heart-warmer, featuring LEE Byung-hun as a washed up boxer looking after his brother, that claimed the next weekend after posting a slight increase in its second week. *The Maze Runner* finished seventh during the period with 2.3 million tickets sold while *Keys to the Heart* wound up with a stellar 3.42 million viewers as it found itself in fifth place. Disney claimed another January animation hit in Korea, following the successes of *Frozen* and *Zootopia*, with their Pixar title *Coco*. It opened in third

place in mid-January, behind *Along with the Gods* and *1987*, yet, despite never coming close to first place, the critically-acclaimed family title drew crowds week after week and ended up in fourth place for the first quarter with 3.51 million viewers.

Demonstrating the strength of family titles in Korea in January was also the release of *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle*. Though it paled in comparison to its performance in America and other major markets and never charted above third place, the Dwayne Johnson-led action-adventure scored a healthy 1.71 million admissions and was the ninth most well-attended title of the period.

Lunary New Year showdown

As the first month of the year wound down, the release schedule for the Lunar New Year holiday, one of Korea's two major holiday seasons (along with

Chuseok) kicked into gear with the release of the first of five major titles targeting the holidays. Korea's top four studios (CJ, Lotte, Showbox and NEW) each had a horse in the race, along with a Disney global tentpole, yet, despite big budgets, stars and so much on offer, the Lunar New Year holiday race was a quiet one in 2018, as audiences shied away from turning local titles into bonafide hits since many viewers were instead caught up in the Winter Olympics fever taking place on the East Coast in Pyeongchang.

First up was NEW with the superhero action-drama *Psychokinesis*, featuring RYOO Seung-ryong as an ordinary man who acquires superpowers and attempts to save his daughter and her colleagues from gangsters and developers. Despite high expectations and a budget in excess of USD 10 million, this follow-up from *Train to Busan* (2016) hitmaker YEON Sang-ho only managed to win its first weekend by a slim majority against the third week of *Keys to the Heart* and ultimately fell shy of a million viewers. Next up was Showbox's *Detective K: Secret of the Living Dead* and while

the franchise title paled in comparison to its two predecessors, it would end up comfortably beating out all local titles at the Lunar New Year box office with just 2.44 million admissions, making it the sixth best-selling film of the quarter. The third installment of the period investigative action-comedy franchise was well below the 4.79 million viewers of the 2011 original and the 3.87 million spectators of its 2015 sequel.

As the holidays kicked into full gear in mid-February, both CJ Entertainment's *Golden Slumber* and Lotte Entertainment's *Heung-boo: The Revolutionist* went up against the Disney-Marvel tentpole *Black Panther*. As a star vehicle for GANG Dong-won and based on a popular Japanese novel, man-on-the-run thriller *Golden Slumber* was well positioned to perform strongly during the holidays. However, lukewarm critical and audience reactions and a marketing campaign that failed to put forward an intriguing premise led to a humdrum result as the film mustered only 1.39 million viewers by the end of its run. Even

less impressive was the period drama *Heung-boo: The Revolutionist*, which features a posthumous performance by the late KIM Joo-hyuk and reached a tepid 416,000 viewers.

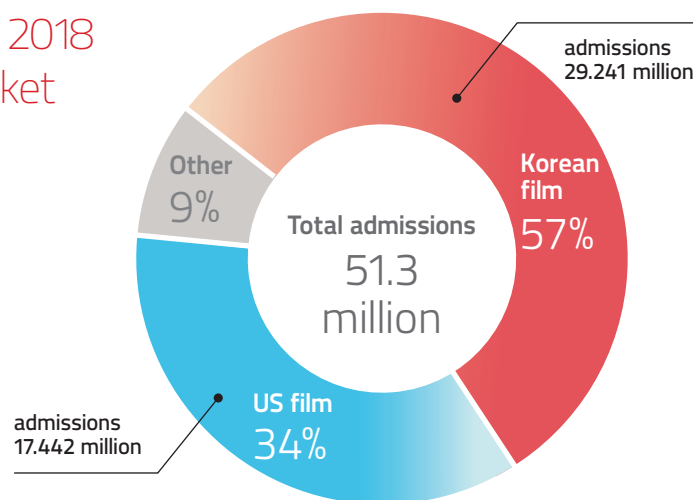
Though normally reserved for a homegrown title, this year's Lunar New Year box office crown was soundly swept up by Disney-Marvel's global smash *Black Panther*. The film featured a significant set piece shot and set in Busan, the port metropolis on Korea's southern coast, and drew strong critical reactions ahead of its launch. Pent-up curiosity gave the film a rousing start as it bowed to a phenomenal 1.9 million spectators in its first five days. Although audiences didn't connect with the film quite as strongly as some had expected, it did finish with a mighty 5.39 million viewers, making it the top new title at the Korean box office in 2018, and the second among all releases counted in the first quarter of the year.

Local films dominate during energetic low season

Traditionally one of the slowest periods of the year, March 2018 was the first since 2013 during which Korean films held onto a majority, as they accounted for an impressive 62% of sales. The month kicked off with the debut of the long-delayed period romantic comedy *The Princess and the Matchmaker*, which opened in first but quickly faded in the days that followed. The film wound up with 1.34 million viewers, just outside of the top 10.

Opening in second place the same week was YIM Soon-rye's youth drama *Little Forest* with KIM Tae-ri and RYU Jun-yeol. The film benefitted from excellent word of mouth and remained in the top

1st Quarter, 2018 Korean Market





The two movies that opened last year and continued to attract audiences throughout January 2018.

Along with the Gods: The Two Worlds, 1987: *When the Day Comes*.

five for four weeks, ultimately receiving 1.49 million entries, enough for tenth place on the quarterly chart.

The following week brought with it another new local chart topper in the form of *The Vanished*, a remake of the Spanish mystery-thriller *The Body*. The mid-level commercial title finished its run with a respectable 1.32 million viewers.

In mid-March, it was the fantasy melodrama *Be With You*, with SON Ye-jin and SO Ji-sub, that took the weekend crown. Solid word of mouth brought the film to a very healthy 2.23 million viewers by the end of March, making it the eighth highest-selling film of the period as it continues to draw crowds in April. *Pacific Rim: Uprising* eked out a slim win the following weekend but quickly disappeared from the charts as it barely scraped over a million viewers in total.

Closing out the first quarter with a surprise was the massive debut of the local found footage horror *Gonjiam: Haunted Asylum* from director JUNG Bum-shik which drew close to a million viewers in its opening weekend, beating the debut of the big-budget

Korean thriller *Seven Years of Night*. The horror hit has already passed 2.3 million viewers as of April 10.

Lower budgets edge out expensive tentpoles

While films with large budgets fell short of expectations in early 2018, low and mid-budget genre titles contributed to a strong performance for the local film industry and demonstrated the potential of genres that have struggled to find favor in the last few years. *Gonjiam: Haunted Asylum* had the best debut for a horror in several years and is only behind KIM Jee-won's *A Tale of Two Sisters* (2003) as the second best-selling Korean horror film ever with time still left to change that. Equally impressive were the encouraging results of three melodramas: *Keys to the Heart*, *Little Forest* and *Be With You*. While large-scale releases and thrillers will continue to draw crowds in Korea, the results of the first three months of the year demonstrate that local viewers are eager to see the local industry deliver films across a broad spectrum of genres.

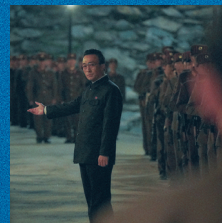
Korean films on the horizon

April may not produce quite the same level of surprises, as local studios may try to steer clear of some particularly fierce competition, namely *Avengers: Infinity War* at the end of the month, but the Korean film industry should come back strong in May with several big contenders shuffling into theaters. The end of spring will welcome LEE Hae-young's action-crime film *Believer*, a remake of Johnny TO's *Drug War*, the Don LEE (aka MA Dong-seok) led boxing comedy-drama *Champion* and LEE Chang-dong's long-awaited return *Burning*.

Looking ahead to summer, a slew of big-budget releases are waiting in the wings as the fantasy sequel *Along with the Gods: The Last 49 Days*, 1970s crime saga *The Drug King*, period siege drama *Ansi Fortress* (translated title), the North Korean kidnapping action-drama *Take Point*, period creature feature *Monstrum*, hostage thriller *Negotiation* and KIM Jee-won's sci-fi action *Inrang* (Korean title) are just some of the major titles expected to hit theaters in the coming months. ㊦

by Pierce Conran

The Korean Titles
That Will Shine in Cannes



The Return of Storytellers



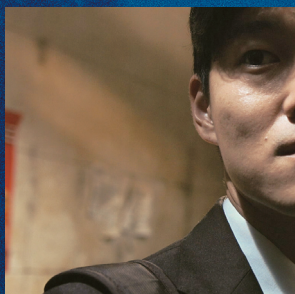
The Cannes Film Festival is welcoming the return of LEE Chang-dong after eight years of absence. His sixth film *Burning* has been invited to this year's competition section. His 2007 film *Secret Sunshine* won the Best Actress Award, and he received the Best Screenplay Award for *Poetry* in 2010. This is the third time LEE has been invited to the competition section. It is an unprecedented achievement on his part that five out of the six films he directed have been introduced at Cannes, including *A Peppermint Candy* which was invited to the Directors' Fortnight in 2000 and *Oasis* which was showcased at the International Critics' Week in 2003. YOO Ah-in (*Veteran* (2015) and *The Throne* (2014)) attends the Cannes Film Festival for the first time in his acting career. Steven YEUN returns to Cannes for the second time after his participation last year with *Ojka*. Fortunately for JEON Jong-seo, she heads to Cannes with her debut film. We look forward to seeing what new record the 71st Cannes Film Festival sets for LEE Chang-dong, a true 'Cannes man'.

Yet another storyteller is set to come back this year. YOON Jong-bin, who first attended Cannes with *The Unforgiven* (2006), has been invited to the festival for the second time with his new film *The Spy Gone North* (included in the non-competitive

Midnight Screenings). The two stars of the film have also been previously invited to Cannes; HWANG Jung-min for his role in *The Wailing* (Out of Competition section) and CHO Jin-woong for his performance in *The Handmaiden* (Competition section) and *A Hard Day* (Directors' Fortnight). The International Critics' Week, one of the major sidebars at Cannes along with the Directors' Fortnight, showcases first and second films by directors from all over the world. KIM Cheol-hwi's short film *Exemplary Citizen* receives the honour this year.

There is one more name that catches our attention. Korean German actor Teo YOO stars in the Russian director Kirill SEREBRENNIKOV's *Leto*, selected for the competition section. He plays Viktor TSOI, the legendary Soviet rock star of Korean heritage who became a prominent symbol of resistance. His credits include the Hollywood film *Equals* (2015) and several Korean films such as *The Actresses* (2009), *Code Name: Jackal* (2012), and *One on One* (2014). We now wait to see who wins the sweet kiss of the Palme d'Or, much like the still image from Jean-Luc Godard's 1965 film *Pierrot Le Fou* featured in this year's official poster.

by SHIM Eun-ha





LEE Chang-dong

- **BURNING**
- Competition



Views and Sensibilities towards the Present Time

A long time ago, I visited the set of *Poetry* (2010) a few times on special invitation. It was always quiet and solemn on set, though some people shared jokes in low voices every now and then. When one of the cast asked LEE Chang-dong, “So ‘Poetry’ is the title of the film?” the director responded jokingly, “I guess we’re set up for a failure.” I also remember how YOON Jeong-hee in the lead role complained in jest that the harsh director never paid her a compliment, to which LEE just smiled and said ‘I never got to learn how to do that.’

Once I had a chance to meet MOON So-ri at an unofficial occasion. She began her acting career in LEE Chang-dong’s *Peppermint Candy* (1999) and was his screen persona in *Oasis* (2002). The moment LEE Chang-dong was brought up in our conversation, she let out a sigh and said “Don’t even go there. What an awful...” – so much was left unsaid. She signed once again but it was done out of respect, love and reproach. As many fans of LEE’s

films know, director RYOO Seung-wan had a small acting role in *Oasis*. Later, when people asked him about the secret to LEE’s direction, he made a joke that had a lot of truth in it: “There’s no secret. He just makes people do it until they succeed.”

Like an Ascetic Torturing Himself

LEE Chang-dong is famous for the way he pushes himself and his cast to the extreme in order to get great scenes. It is a well known fact that while shooting *Secret Sunshine* (2007) JEON Do-yeon became so exhausted that she had to ask for a short break. LEE Chang-dong does not have fun on set. Rather, he tortures himself with endless anguish, but thanks to this we encounter extraordinary scenes in his films. For example, you may remember the scene in *Poetry* where Mija sings alone in a karaoke. I happened to visit the set on the day they shot that scene. When I arrived, the producer whispered to me that they were on the 57th take. They had already tried dozens of takes the day before, but the director was still not satisfied. I thought it must be a very important scene and observed closely. To my surprise, it looked pretty simple. The director’s explanation was far from simple though. “I know this looks simple and straightforward but there is a very delicate nuance in it. I’m not sure if audiences will recognize it but it’s important to me nonetheless. Mija sings a song with a repetitive *ppongjjak* rhythm (an old-fashioned genre of Korean pop music) [hums the song a little] and the camera must turn towards her when she sings a certain line. If you ask me why, I have no answer. But still it’s really important to me. The camera captures the window of the karaoke first, with pictures like birds and clouds painted on it. We then get a glimpse of Mija that’s out of focus. The door must open precisely at the moment

BURNING



the image starts to come into focus. The timing is important.” You may have already forgotten about this trivial scene in *Poetry*. However, if you watch the film again and notice the delicate and complex directorial intention behind seemingly trivial scenes, you’ll have truly understood LEE Chang-dong’s world.

LEE Chang-dong began his career in filmmaking as an assistant director on PARK Kwang-su’s *To the Starry Island* (1993). As a promising novelist back then he felt he’d hit the limit of his ability in fiction writing. He volunteered to step in as assistant director for PARK, and worked his fingers to the bone on every chore. Years later, LEE Chang-dong recalled that time and said he’d taken on such a difficult and unfamiliar task “so as to punish [himself].” To this day, it’s unclear why he referred to the job as punishment. One thing is for sure however: from the beginning, LEE Chang-dong

believed that he could only create something new by scourging himself, and he still holds fast to that belief. In other words, like an ascetic torturing himself constantly to grasp divine providence, LEE Chang-dong never stops pushing himself to understand the world better.

Dark Corners, the Powerless, Hidden Truths and Inconvenient Morals

LEE Chang-dong is always interested in the following: dark corners of the society, the weak and powerless among us, hidden truths, and inconvenient, painful morals. This was apparent from the start. His directorial debut *Green Fish* (1997) conveys in full problems caused by the abnormal development of Koreans’ modern history. The film shows the director’s consciousness of the film noir genre. But the Korean film noir he creates here differs from its American counterparts. Mak-dong is the protagonist of a strictly male-centered melodrama. Perhaps the location holds more importance in this film. Korea’s capital city, Seoul, has long suffered from overpopulation and a severe lack of housing. This means many people got pushed out to the surrounding regions, which soon came to be known as the “New Towns”. Mak-dong’s home, Ilsan, is one such “New Town” and plays a key role in the film. While observing the radical

BURNING





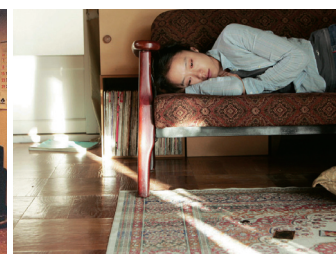
Green Fish



Peppermint Candy



Oasis



Secret Sunshine



Poetry

transformation of the city or things that disappear, LEE Chang-dong paints a stark and tragic portrait of a young man's fateful downfall. Even before he became a director, he'd earned a reputation for himself as a writer of "Division Literature" as he was highly interested in issues surrounding the division of the Korean peninsula. Furthermore, in a wider sense he is concerned with Korea's modern history. For this reason, he considers the horrors of history that South Korea has experienced. He deeply bemoans the atrocities committed at the Gwangju Uprising in May 1980. In fact, he even feels guilty for being elsewhere when the uprising took place, and that sense of guilt is prevalent in *Peppermint Candy*. Indeed, he once explained that he "wanted to depict a man's specific experience of time." However, time in this film transcends personal realms and becomes part of history, and the very origin of time can be traced back to Gwangju.

In *Oasis* (2002), LEE Chang-dong pays close attention to people in the lower sphere of life. We encounter a gangster and a disabled person, both abandoned by others. But they fall in love with each other and restore their lives. The director draws a superb performance from the cast, and deals with the brutal reality faced by people. At the same time however, he discovers a glimmer of hope in the midst of all the misfortunes. Finally at the most crucial moment, the director creates his own fantasy, thereby overturning the view that he only values realism and making a new impression.

Without a doubt, LEE radically expanded his own cinematic form and philosophy in *Secret Sunshine*. The story of a mother whose child gets kidnapped explores seemingly disparate elements of the world

like crime and punishment, superficial divinity, flagrant madness and meaningless mid-afternoon sunshine all at once. The film incessantly asks questions and makes audiences do the same. One of the key questions posed in the film is this: "When the man who kidnapped and killed my child says he's found peace and God's forgiveness in prison, what about my dead son and myself?" The film delicately delivers the most appalling irony of life. JEON Do-yeon's excellent performance as a mother who reaches the very bottom of suffering further adds to the film's brilliance. The suffering that we encounter in *Secret Sunshine* is that of a victim. Then in his next film *Poetry*, the director moves over to the opposite side and deals with the suffering of a perpetrator. That perpetrator is an elderly woman whose days are numbered, an amateur poet who aspires to write poetry. The wrongdoing is not really committed by her, but she is almost like the director's other self. Therefore, she agonizes over what her grandson has done. She is able to sympathize with other people's suffering, and the film does not forget to ask what poetry means to her. The title seems too broad but the director wants his audiences to identify with its universality. He poses several questions in this film. What is beauty in life and how does poetry relate to that beauty? Ultimately, LEE's masterpiece asks how we define morals.

Portrait of Youth and the First Digital Movie

It's been eight years since the release of *Poetry*, and during that time there were many rumors and speculations about LEE Chang-dong's next project. After trying a few things, the director is back at last with an adaptation of MURAKAMI Haruki's short story 'Barn Burning'. Not only does this mark a meeting of two great minds, LEE Chang-dong and MURAKAMI, but *BURNING* is also the first of LEE's works to be based on an original story. What is even more fascinating is that it features his youngest characters since *Green Fish*. As LEE Chang-dong never fails to express his views and sensibilities towards the present time, his new film is expected to offer keen sensibilities and sharp insight into young people in Korea today.

by JUNG Han-Seok (Film Critic) | photographed by BAEK Jong-heon



The Darling of Genre Films

This isn't the first time director YOON Jong-bin has been invited to the Cannes International Film Festival. 13 years ago, he made *The Unforgiven* (2005) which was his graduation project from Chung-Ang University and also his very first feature film. It was invited to the 59th Cannes in the Un Certain Regard section. The movie exposes the contradictions within Korean society as seen by the youths serving in the army. This is also the film that allowed him to make a name for himself. YOON Jong-bin's senior at the university, actor HA Jung-woo, played the protagonist in *The Unforgiven* before his more famous roles in *The Chaser* (Director NA Hong-jin, 2008), *The Yellow Sea* (Director NA Hong-jin, 2010) and *The Handmaiden* (PARK Chan-wook, 2016). When they were in Cannes together, they promised to become a great director and actor, just like Martin Scorsese and Robert De Niro did.

YOON Jong-bin

- THE SPY GONE NORTH
- Midnight Screenings

Second Invitation After *The Unforgiven*

After his debut feature, YOON Jong-bin made *Beastie Boys* (2008), a coming-of-age film (or at least what looks like one), and *Nameless Gangster: Rules of the Time* (2012), a period piece. He studied the daily lives of those blinded by money (*Beastie Boys*), and depicted Busan of the 1980s by following a corrupted customs officer (CHOI Min-shik, *Nameless Gangster*).

His themes and genres may differ greatly, but one thing that his stories have in common is that they portray Korean men who seek recognition from others and are busy showing off. Up to *Beastie Boys*, YOON Jong-bin was far from being a bankable director. However, *Nameless Gangster* sold 4.72 million tickets (with a total profit of USD 36.5 million, according to Korean Box Office Information System) and became a box office hit.

After the release of *Nameless Gangster*, YOON Jong-bin decided to go independent. He founded his production company, Moonlight Film. When asked about the reason behind this choice, he says, “I

make films with my own ideas, so there is no need to work with other production companies.” The first project he worked on as a producer and a director is a film that was rated 15, *KUNDO: Age of the Rampant* (2014). Set during the Joseon Dynasty, this period film had a strong social message while providing entertainment. In the film, the subjects fight back to put an end to a corrupt world, and they find victory at the end. Compared to his previous film where the characters would disappear bitterly after losing to money and power, it’s a big difference. HA Jung-woo appears with a shaved head opposite the beautiful villain, GANG Dong-won. This title was highly anticipated due to the cast, but the film only sold 4.77 million tickets (USD 36.9 million in profit).

Finding Success as a Producer

Between *KUNDO: Age of the Rampant* and *The Spy Gone North*, YOON Jong-bin has been mostly active as a producer. After Moonlight Film was established, SON Sang-bum, who previously worked in the film business department of CJ E&M, joined the company and took over its management, serving as CEO. SON was YOON’s junior in university and also the assistant director of *The Unforgiven*. They worked together to produce films from other graduates of Chung-Ang University, LEE Il-hyung’s *A Violent Prosecutor* (2016) and KIM

The Unforgiven



Nameless Gangster



KUNDO: Age of the Rampant





A Violent Prosecutor

Hyung-ju's *A Sheriff In Town* (2017). The films sold 9.7 million tickets (profit of USD 77.3 million) and 2.58 million tickets (profit of USD 20.8 million) respectively, becoming huge box office hits.

When asked about his secret to producing successful films, Director YOON Jong-bin modestly said, "The two films were made by directors who also graduated from my university. I'm also a director, so I have nothing to say about them. I only did my best as a producer to meet their requests." However, it's true that the success of *A Violent Prosecutor* and *A Sheriff In Town* had a positive influence on the company as it was preparing *The Spy Gone North*.

YOON Jong-bin's Leap, *The Spy Gone North*

As the film deals with the true story of an operation fabricated by the National Intelligence Service (NIS) and was developed at a time when the government's blacklist on artists was effective, the filmmaking process of *The Spy Gone North* had to be hidden under a strict veil. Even though I followed the project throughout the whole process, I will not share much about the film prior to its release but one thing I can assure you is that despite the diverse genres director YOON Jong-bin showed us with his filmography, this project will put him under a new spotlight. This is the reason why we must keep our eyes on this cineaste. We can relieve our curiosity towards *The Spy Gone North*, selected as a Midnight Screening at Cannes, by reading our interview with the director.

INTERVIEW

Between Film Noir and Everyday Life

Four years after directing the entertaining period piece *KUNDO: Age of the Rampant* (2014), director YOON Jong-bin makes his comeback with *The Spy Gone North*. Based on the 1997 "Black Venus Case", when the Agency for National Security Planning (ANSP) led a secret operation to make Democratic candidate KIM Dae-jung lose the 15th presidential election and unveiled the real name of its undercover agent PARK Chae-seo. The ANSP used "Black Venus", a codename given to agent PARK Chae-seo, to infiltrate North Korea's affairs and collect information. At the time, Black Venus successfully went through the North Korean security in Beijing, and managed to meet KIM Jong-il in Pyongyang. *The Spy Gone North* is an espionage movie that follows him through his operation, while exploring the inevitable downsides one must face as a spy.

The production process was thoroughly veiled.

Originally, we were working on a story about the ANSP in the 1980s but while researching the different operations, we found out about this spy with the codename "Black Venus" (real name: PARK Chae-seo). While retracing his steps, we ended up questioning if this had actually happened.

What in particular about the "Black Venus Case" impressed you?

Black Venus ended up playing a part in a very important moment in modern history, although it wasn't something he intended. I found that very cinematic. Since this story is an undisclosed part of history with limited articles and materials, I was extremely curious to know how it ended. Through a reporter who covered the story before, I tried to get in touch with PARK Chae-seo but found out then he was incarcerated. (PARK Chae-seo was sentenced to six years in prison for leaking information to the North Korean military. He was released on May 31, 2016.)

What part of the case made you decide to put this story on screen?

When we talk about spy films, I think many will think of action. I found the path a spy has to take in order to get to North Korea very interesting. Furthermore, when questioned about their actions, be them National Intelligence Service (NIS) agents, Blue House officials, or people from the Prosecutor's Office, all said the orders came from high above and could not have been disregarded. Is it better to follow orders at any cost or should one refuse command if they believe the organization is doing something wrong? In the event of standing up to one's hierarchy, what could be the consequences? I thought asking these questions would be meaningful.

What was the key to transposing this true story on screen?

The story I based the film on happened between 1991 and 1998, for seven consecutive years. In most spy movies, the protagonist is usually given a mission which they work towards completing and they always have a known antagonist. However, it wasn't like that with this case, making it hard to cinematize. There were too many individuals involved so we had to cut the list down, merge some characters and remove a lot of them. This process took quite a long time.

What about HWANG Jung-min? What made you think he would be suited for Black Venus' character?

HWANG Jung-min actually physically resembles the young Black Venus. Since Black Venus used to be a soldier, I needed a face that looked honest and naive but that could carry a rebellious side at the same time.



The Spy Gone North

LEE Sung-min, CHO Jin-woong and JU Ji-hoon were cast as LEE Myung-woon, HAK Sung and Mr. Jung. What are their roles like?

LEE Myung-woon is an elite who studied capitalism and a key figure from the North. He works in foreign currency exchanges and is also someone who's hard to read. HAK Sung works at ANSP, is the leader in charge of the operation and also the only person who knows Black Venus' identity. Mr. Jung is another elite character and an agent of the North Korean State Security Department who was dispatched to China. LEE Myung-woon and he are always keeping each other in check.

The process of building up tension from the dialogue must have played an important role.

I'm sure the audience will find it interesting to see how an actual case of espionage takes place. There's a lot of tension between every character's words and jokes are always more than just jokes.

You worked with cinematographer CHOI Chan-min once again for this film. Since it's a spy film, did you shoot it as a film noir?

Film noir emphasizes the dark side of reality in a visual way whereas *The Spy Gone North* considers what happens on a daily basis more important. We did have to create tension on the screen however, so I would say we're somewhere in between a film noir and a movie about everyday life.

Does Black Venus go to Pyongyang and meet with KIM Jong-il?

He might, or he might not. (laughs) In real life, PARK Chae-seo did meet with KIM Jong-il in person.

by KIM Seong-hoon (Film Journalist) | photographed by BAEK Jong-heon



KIM Cheol-hwi

- **EXEMPLARY CITIZEN**
- Critics' Week

The Taste of a Short Film



Is what you see what really exists? If not, what's the difference? Invited to Cannes' Critics' Week, *Exemplary Citizen* asks these common questions from everyday life. The film starts with a group of men in a dark, cramped toilet. They look as shabby as the toilet is filthy. Then a smartly dressed young man comes in. We cannot help but eye him with suspicion since they're in such a shady place. But his behavior sets him apart. He picks up the garbage strewn everywhere, and gives a cigarette to a man who desperately needs it. Above all, he proves himself a man of great talent by unclogging a toilet after a struggle. Audiences who are familiar with public toilet culture in Korea may predict the film's ending, but the majority will be surprised or end up smiling ruefully. *Exemplary Citizen* offers the enjoyment of a short film. The story unfolds at a quick, daring pace and ends unexpectedly. In a country like Korea that has undergone rapid economic growth, money serves as a barometer of people and their lives. The older generation clung to money because they tried their utmost to overcome poverty. Does the new generation enjoy a free, affluent life? The film argues that things haven't really changed much. It's difficult to point a finger of blame at the protagonist and claim he's sold his soul to the devil. We cannot help but ask ourselves whether his hands that put up stickers are purely disgusting. KIM Cheol-hwi is a new name to Korean audience. Considering he is still a university student,

he has deftly fulfilled the role of director. Below is an interview with the young man filled with passion for cinema.

You've been invited to Cannes with your very first film.

How does it feel?

When my distributor (INDIESTORY Inc.) suggested that I submit my film to Cannes, I couldn't even afford the submission fee. I'd have missed the chance had it not been for my mother's help. I remember how happy I was when I got the reply about Cannes' invitation. Then as the news went around, I started to feel some pressure. I find it interesting that my film has been invited because it introduces a culture unfamiliar to foreign audiences. Right now, I look forward to enjoying the film festival.

The first thing I noticed was the production design. A lot of work must have gone into it. Did you build a special set?

The result owes a lot to my colleagues from school who took a production design class with me. We rented a toilet in a building in Seoul. The plan was to shoot there for three days, but the building owner saw the site on the second day and kicked us out. We had to use a different toilet for the second half of the film, and tried our best to hide it from the audience.

The toilet in the film is filthy but perhaps not half as bad as the one in *Trainspotting* (1996) (laughs).

There are only so many angles you can take inside a real toilet. Since I couldn't afford to have a whole set built, I referred to the toilet scenes in *Trainspotting*. As I said, we had an unexpected change of location during our tight schedule, so we were seriously pressed by time.

How did you first come up with the story?

I used to live in a small rented room without a toilet, and the communal toilet I shared with others in the building was so filthy I felt really anxious each time I had to use it. That's where I first got the idea for the film. Then I took out my personal experience and further developed the story, adding



Exemplary Citizen

details like the protagonist's job and the fact that he puts up stickers.

Unlike most other short films these days, the film consists of very short scenes.

If I had wanted to focus on emotions, I would've used longer scenes. What I had in mind was something similar to NA Hong-jin's short film *A Perfect Red Snapper Dish* (2005). During the editing process, I cut out anything that could be even slightly boring. In the end I wondered if I'd made it too short.

Tell us about the main actor.

YOON Se-hyun is a professional actor. He was the first one I met on the first day of auditions. He really fit the image I had in mind, and we got along well together. The script gave him many difficult tasks and I'm grateful that he did such a great job.

The irony is that the protagonist works so conscientiously at a job that brings him no benefit.

I have no intention of condemning the protagonist as a bad person. I think everyone in the world is pretty much the same. In completing the story, I recalled my own experience of putting my personal needs first in my relationship with my family. I hope the story does not come across as drawing a distinction between good and evil.

What are your aspirations for the future?

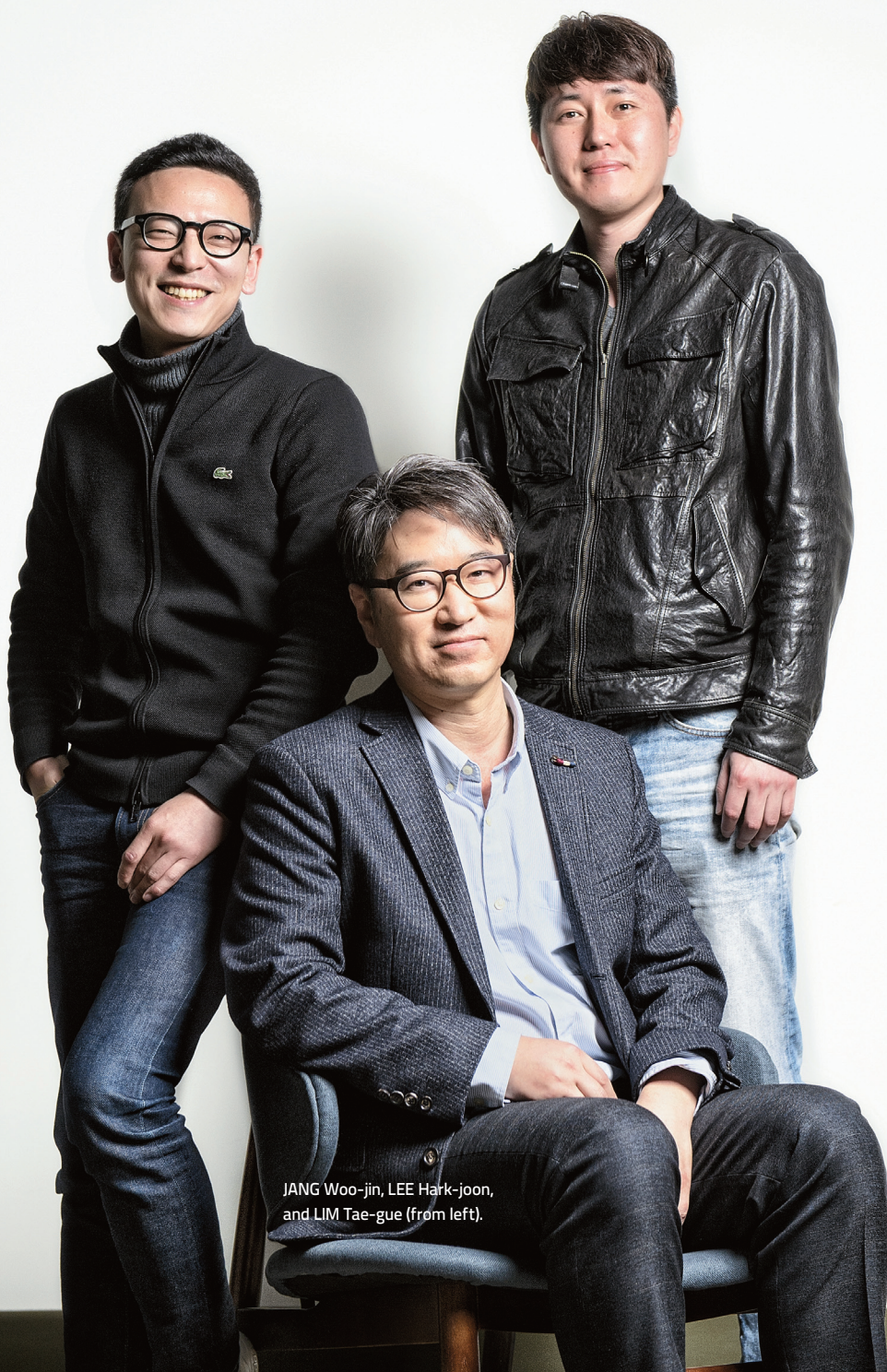
A director once said in an interview that the more passionate you are about what you want to say, the better your film becomes. I ran into so many difficulties with my first film that I forgot what I wanted to say and just concentrated on completing the project. For my next project, I want to make sure I maintain my passion for the subject matter throughout. ☺

by LEE Yong Cheol (Film Critic) | photographed by BAEK Jong-heon

The Present of Korean Indie Films

Meeting the Three Korean Films of Jeonju Cinema Project

The 19th Jeonju International Film Festival (JIFF) will be held from May 3rd until the 12th. JIFF always strives to discover original films from Korea and abroad, regardless of their form or style. Jeonju Cinema Project (JCP), the highlight of the festival, is probably the best example of this philosophy. JIFF discovers projects, provides production support, then screens the finished films at the festival as world premieres, allowing the JCP films to attract a lot of attention internationally. Last year, *The First Lap* won the Best Emerging Director award at the Locarno International Film Festival, while the documentary *Our President*, about late president ROH Moo-hyun, proved to be enormously popular as it welcomed 1,850,000 entries at the box office. This year, JCP will introduce five titles. We met with the three Korean directors to ask them how they feel now that their JCP films are completed and to tell us more about them. Their stories give insight into the current state of the Korean indie film scene.



JANG Woo-jin, LEE Hark-joon,
and LIM Tae-gue (from left).

A GOOD BUSINESS

LEE Hark-joon

A Good Business is a documentary film that is sure to spark heated discussions at this year's Jeonju International Film Festival. Director LEE Hark-joon, who used to be a reporter, aims to tell the world about the human rights issues North Korean defectors face. This film allows us to take a closer look at the lives of North Korean human rights activists.

The title of your movie is striking.

It has a double meaning. It can mean that this business is a benevolent one, but also that it's a profitable one. I wanted it to have this double meaning to show the dual problem that lies with North Korean defections. For example, the brokers who help the defectors are practically making money by selling people, but they don't feel guilty at all. Whatever their intentions may be, a lot of North Korean refugees can have their lives saved thanks to them. I almost chose "Good and Evil" for the title of the film because of the ambiguity regarding the problem of North Korean defections.

You used to write for a newspaper. How did you come to make a documentary?

I met Pastor KIM Sung-eun twelve years ago while covering a story about the issues behind defections. He's the most famous activist for the human rights of North Korean refugees. At the suggestion of the newspaper I was working for, I directed a TV documentary called *On the Border* with KIM Sung-eun's help, to shed a light on these issues. That's when I developed two aspirations. The first was the desire to make a good documentary, and the other was to be able to show the whole route of a defection. The problem is that escaping from North Korea is illegal in every way. In South Korea, we don't really take an interest in this topic, but many people from abroad have shown interest. I noticed that most of the information we have is fragmented, and no one has ever tried to show the system thoroughly before. I decided to find out every detail about this abnormal system.

You've been documenting this matter for five years. However, this



may come as a surprise to some that you see no difference between a North Korean human rights activist, a broker and a journalist.

In previous documentaries about North Korean defectors, the good and evil were always clearly identified. The North Korean system was evil, the defectors were poor people, the activists were the saviors, and the journalist were not part of the story at all. However, all the parties involved with this issue have two sides to them. For example, journalists purposefully delay the reunion between the defector and their family to create a dramatic moment, while the activists only help the North Korean defectors who could become the talk of the town in order to become famous. Can we really consider them kinder than the brokers? I wanted to show individuals who are walking the line between good and evil.

Visually speaking, what did you want to represent?

I wanted the documentary to look like a Hong Kong noir film. It's somewhat like a road movie, but I tried to keep the tension tight as if something could happen at any time. I told myself this could well be the last documentary I will ever make, so I never hid my camera, not even while we were smuggling into another country or escaping.

THE LAND ON THE WAVES

LIM Tae-gue

LIM Tae-gue's previous film *The Seeds of Violence* was a highly anticipated film at last year's JIFF. This film about the chain reaction of violence taking place within the Korean army received positive criticism for its realistic portrayal of everyday violence and helped the director win the Grand Prize in the Korean Competition section. *The Land on the Waves* is LIM Tae-gue's newest title about how the structural ills of society can affect individuals.

Your film is about a fisherman and his family. The fisherman gets abducted by North Koreans, and when he comes back he is wrongly accused of being a spy. Why did you want to tell this story?

While I was thinking about my next project, I read an article about a group of fishermen that were once abducted by the North and were now trying to regain their honor after being treated as spies for many years. More than these fishermen, I was wondering how their sons must have been living with this situation. In the past, there was the idea of guilt by association, meaning that all the members of a family would be penalized if one of them had committed a crime. I researched and found out that many of these families broke off all contact with the abductees. I thought that if some of these abducted fishermen had sons, their communication problems must have left the private sphere due to the involvement of both society and the government. I wanted to look at this problem of relationships in a broad way.

The story is about a fisherman, his son and his grandson. Why was it necessary for you to talk about three generations?

I thought that the problem between the father and the son would not just end there, and that such a problem must tend to repeat itself. In terms of scope, it was important for me to show the violence being repeated. I wanted to show that this suffering and reclamation had shockwaves that affected three generations.

The film is set in the city of Gunsan, in North Jeolla Province. Many of these abducted fishermen were from Gunsan.

That's why I chose the city, but also because I wanted to know more about the people who live there, where time seems to have stopped. The film is set in an old port in Gunsan that is almost like a ruin. I was wondering how local people felt living in such a deteriorating city.

Your previous film *The Seeds of Violence* is about a chain of violence created by South Korean military culture. You seem to be interested in shedding light on personal stories within the framework of social structure.

That's right. When I'm writing a scenario, I get a lot of my ideas from social phenomena. I often create my stories and characters after taking an anecdote that has left a deep impression on me as a subject. The more realistic it sounds the more I'm thrilled as I think it could become my next story.



ON A WINTER'S NIGHT

JANG Woo-jin



“How are our past, present, and future connected? I wanted to answer this question through my film.” This is what director JANG Woo-jin said about his intentions when he was writing his new film. *On a Winter's Night* is director JANG Woo-jin's third feature film after *A Fresh Start* (2014) and *Autumn, Autumn* (2016). A middle-aged couple decides to spend the night at the place where they first slept together. *On a Winter's Night* is an interesting exploration of the relativity of time and space, as the past and the present are blended together into the same frame while each character keeps his own perception of time and space.

You have a long history with JIFF.

My first feature film *A Fresh Start* won the Grand Prize in the Korean Competition section. I was the producer of another JCP *The First Lap* last year, and this year I'm part of the JCP with *On a Winter's Night*. The three times I've

worked with them, I noticed JIFF is a festival that knows how to make directors feel comfortable. What I love the most about it is that they guarantee you creative freedom.

In *A Fresh Start* and *Autumn, Autumn*, your focus was on youth. With *On a Winter's Night*, you chose to have a middle-aged couple as your protagonists.

I wanted to try working with people in this age group, as I'll soon be one of them too. I decided to give more to my future. These days, I'm interested in things I don't know. The learning process when I make a movie is interesting.

Why did you choose the city of Chuncheon of all places? What is the reason behind your decision to make it such a meaningful place to the old couple?

I'm from Chuncheon, Gangwon Province. I wanted to get out of this city, but middle-aged people see it as a romantic travel destination and a place to escape to. I found that very interesting. I wanted to tell a story about a couple travelling back to a place that evokes memories from their past, but show that they recall them each in their own way. I tried my best not to separate the past from the present, as well as reality from fantasy.

***On a Winter's Night* is a story about different periods in the same location. You also did something similar in *Autumn, Autumn*. I'm curious about how you used time in this film.**

An American astronomer named Carl Sagan had a big influence on me. After graduating from college, I watched for two or three days straight his *Cosmos* series, a documentary moderated by the astronomer. The theory of relativity was one of them and it fascinated me. Time in our universe may seem forever lasting, but it's relative. The same goes for the world we live in. Sometimes an hour feels like 10 minutes, and sometimes the place I thought I knew feels strange. As such, I'm interested in how time and space change depending on an individual's situation or emotions. 📺

by CHANG Yeong-yeop (Film Journalist) | photographed by CHOI Sung-youil

The Changes Brought to the Korean Film Industry by the #Metoo Movement



The Center for Gender Equality in Korean Film Celebratory event.

PARK Nam-ok's *A Widow* (1955) proved why a female director must tell stories about women. *A Widow* was the first Korean film ever made by a female director. When a release copy was miraculously found in 1997, it was screened at the opening ceremony of the very first Seoul International Women's Film Festival (SIWFF). *A Widow* revolves around an "après-girl". Coined in the 1950s, this Korean neologism (a portmanteau combining the French 'après-guerre' for post-war and the English 'girl') describes a post-war woman who actively follows

her own desires without being tied to traditional moral values, a very common phenomenon in the 1950s. Unlike male directors who would represent such women as femme fatales, PARK's perspective was completely different. PARK Nam-ok had to struggle on the set to finish filming *A Widow* while wearing a baby on her back. Unfortunately, she passed away in 2017 at the age of 94 and was unable to fulfill her dream of shooting a second movie.

The Alliance of Female Filmmakers Looking for Change

Unfortunately, 64 years later, PARK Nam-ok's simple wish of making another film remains difficult to achieve. In the mid-1990s, a group of female directors composed of YIM Soon-rye, LEE Jeong-hyang, BYUN Young-joo, JEONG Jae-eun and PANG Eun-jin made impressive debuts. Other notable female directors would emerge in the following decade, including LEE Kyoung-mi, E.oni, BOO Ji-young, SHIN Su-won, YOON Ga-eun, July JUNG and KIM Yang-hee. However, the number of female directors stays very small in comparison to male directors. According to statistics from the Korean Film Council (KOFIC), among all the commercial films produced in the last five years with a budget over USD 1 million or having played in more than 100 theaters, only 6.8% were directed by women filmmakers. On top of that, only 24% of them had female protagonists. In the 100 years of Korean film history, few films have told stories about

women as seen by female directors, and most filmmaking resources have been dedicated to male directors. The excessive authority entitled to the so-called "charismatic" male directors has created an environment in which violence is deemed acceptable on the set. Perhaps this is why the creation of the Seoul International Women's Film Festival, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year (from May 31 to June 7, 2018), was so meaningful. Since its aim is to present stories of women and minorities, the festival decided that films made by male filmmakers must account for a maximum of only 10 percent of all the selection, and all filmmakers invited to the competition section must be women. This is an effort to rectify the extreme gender imbalance in the current film industry and to show that there are great stories to be told about women and by talented female filmmakers.

The Opening of The Center for Gender Equality in Korean Film

Actually, the hottest and most desperate cry for change in today's Korean film industry is coming from young women. In 2016, a wave of feminism spread like wildfire on social media around the hashtag "sexual violence in film", which called out the widespread problem of sexual violence in the Korean film industry. The accusations raised attention in the industry, which was already considered as a progressive development in its own way. The movement did not die down after that; rather, the #MeToo Movement, a campaign aiming to expose the problem of sexual violence in cultural circles, broke out in 2017 and 2018. Unlike

the previous campaigns that were circumscribed to specific regions of the world and during which the accusers remained anonymous, this time there were a series of charges for sexual assault against famous filmmakers and actors from around the world, including award winners of Venice and Berlin film festivals. Both campaigns were born on social media and were solidarity movements trying to demonstrate that the victims were harassed due to structural problems, and at the same time to keep the long list of victims from growing. In the wake of change, young female filmmakers started a group called "Shooting Femi" and are discussing diverse ways to provide solidarity and education. Another female filmmaker group called "Women in Film", created prior to these events, opened after one year of preparation with KOFIC a Center for Gender Equality in Korean Film. Also known as "Deun Deun", its purpose is to support filmmakers who have been sexually harassed. At the opening ceremony in March 2018, Deun Deun co-director YIM Soon-rye said: "We will do our best to help our fellow women filmmakers to return to the industry after leaving due to sexual harassment." It is time for the offenders, and not the victims, to leave the industry. The good news is that society has started to recognize that the offenders should be the ones solely responsible for all the risks and losses to the film industry.

An Increasing Number of Moviegoers Looking for Women-centered Stories

These movements have also sparked a noticeable shift in moviegoers' demands. With the current film market dominated



Korea's first female director PARK Nam-ok.

by stories of men, women consumers began to voice their desire to see more woman-centered stories they can relate to. This group boycotts misogynistic movies, engages in discussions and criticizes works, and actively mobilizes audiences to rent theaters and watch together movies starring their favorite female characters. This audience made *The Truth Beneath* (LEE Kyoung-mi) a cult film in 2016, and played a significant part in raising the ticket sales of *MISSING* (E.oni) and *The World of Us* (YOON Ga-eun). PARK Nam-ok must have felt lonely in her time as the only woman filmmaker in the battlefield, but the female filmmakers who want to tell stories about women now have each other. And they will continue to make powerful and colorful waves. ㊦

by HyeYoung CHO (SIWFF Programmer)



15 Films, 15 Colors

CJ Entertainment

The Accidental Detective 2: In Action

2018 | TBA | Comedy, Action, Crime

DIRECTOR E.oni **CAST** KWON Sang-woo, SUNG Dong-il, LEE Kwang-soo

RELEASE DATE June, 2018 **CONTACT** CJ Entertainment

Tel+82 2 371 9297 **Fax**+82 2 371 6346 **Email** filmsales@cj.net

The Accidental Detective 2: In Action is the sequel to the popular *The Accidental Detective* (2015).

In the previous film, comic book store owner Dae-man (KWON Sang-woo) was dreaming of becoming a detective, while Tae-su (SUNG Dong-il) was a legendary homicide detective who

turned out to be a total pushover in front of his wife. This sequel is about the detective agency they finally get to open and the case they try to solve. KWON Sang-woo and SUNG Dong-il will be joined by variety show *Running Man*'s star LEE Kwang-soo. He will play a hipster who decided to quit his police job to run a cyber detective agency.

The sequel also attracts attention from the fact that it is directed by E.oni, recognized for her highly intense cinematography and the unique female characters she wrote in *MISSING* (2016). The meeting of a director who previously shot a mystery thriller film with the comical detective duo of this piece allows us to imagine a completely new type of film. Indeed, we expect *The Accidental Detective 2: In Action* to be a unique combination of comedy and thriller.

by SB Peter Bae (Film Journalist)



After Spring

2018 | 72 MIN | Drama

DIRECTOR JANG Jun-yeop, JIN Chung-ha, JEON Shin-hwan

CAST JEON Mi-sun, YOO Jae-myeong, JEON Seok-ho

RELEASE DATE 2018 **CONTACT** CinemaDAL

Tel +82 2 337 2135 **Fax** +82 2 325 2137 **Email** sales@cinemadal.com

April 16th, 2014. Four years ago, the Sewol's sinking caused a national trauma in Korea. After the incident, people swore never to forget. *After Spring* is a film that remembers and commemorates those lost souls, by telling the story of people whose lives were directly or indirectly influenced by the Sewol disaster. Through different genres, their stories were made into an omnibus film: *My Dear Hyang* is a fantasy film, *Survivor* a horror movie, and *A Cicada*, and *The First Holiday* a drama. Rising directors JANG Jun-yeop, JIN Chung-ha and JEON Shin-hwan co-directed the project. Actress JEON Mi-sun, delicately expressive in *Memories of Murder* (2003) and *Hide and Seek* (2013), plays Shin-ae, a woman who misses her daughter while YOO Jae-myeong from *Veteran* and *Inside Men* (2015) is Sang-won, a character trying to move on with his life. JEON Seok-ho, who appeared in the dramas *Misaeng* (2014) and *The Good Wife* (2016), discusses her pain caused by the disaster. *After Spring* is set to have its world premiere this May as part of the Korea Cinemascope section at the 19th Jeonju International Film Festival.

by JEONG Kyu-hwan (Film Journalist)

Goodbye My Love, North Korea

2018 | 89 MIN | Documentary

DIRECTOR KIM So-young

CAST CHOI Kuk-in, KIM Jong-hun, HAN Zinaida, KIM Tae-hun

RELEASE DATE 2018 **CONTACT** CinemaDAL

Tel +82 2 337 2135 **Fax** +82 2 325 2137 **Email** sales@cinemadal.com

Goodbye My Love, North Korea is a film in which art, politics and history have a radical encounter. From Moscow to Kazakhstan, it shares the story of a group of people living as foreigners, while retracing the steps of Korean film history through their eyes. In 1952, during the Korean War, eight young North Korean men left their country for Moscow's National Film School. They ended up criticizing KIM Il-sung's political system, putting their own lives at risk. Among them, three settled down in Kazakhstan and continued to make films. CHOI Kuk-in made *The Year of The Dragon* (1980), a film that discusses the struggles of the Uyghurs people, and became a director recognized by the Soviet Union. HAN Jin became a writer of the Koryo Theater and stayed within a Korean community. Through the eyes of the last survivor, KIM Jong-hun, *Goodbye My Love, North Korea* captures the young's socialist ideals and the elderly refugee's loneliness. It also recorded late director CHOI Kuk-in during his last hours. Director KIM So-young said, "I used the movies, plays, photos and diaries they left behind to capture the essence of those times. These adolescents moved from North Korea to the Soviet Union, then were exiled in Central Asia. I tried to capture the 50-years friendship that ties them together and the turbulent history of this community through their path of exile." It is the last piece of director KIM So-young's Eurasia trilogy, following *Heart of Snow*, *Heart of Blood* (2014) and *Sound of Nomad: Koryo Arirang* (2017).

by JEONG Kyu-hwan (Film Journalist)



Believer

2018 | TBA | Crime, Action

DIRECTOR LEE Hae-young

CAST CHO Jin-woong, RYU Jun-yeol, KIM Sung-ryoung, PARK Hae-jun

RELEASE DATE May 24, 2018 **CONTACT** Contents Panda

Tel +82 2 3490 9372 **Fax** +82 2 515 1055 **Email** sales@its-new.co.kr

Believer is a breathtaking crime action and action film full of chases and feuds as a detective tries to catch the boss of the biggest Asian drug ring. It's a remake of Johnnie TO's 2013 film, *Drug War*, produced by Yong Film whose filmography includes *The Handmaiden* (2016).

Believer received a lot of attention during the production stage due to its compelling script. The collaboration between director LEE Hae-young, who previously made *The Silenced* (2015) and *Like a Virgin* (2006), and scriptwriter CHUNG Seo-kyung, whose filmography includes *The Handmaiden*, *Thirst* (2009), and *Sympathy For Lady Vengeance* (2005), led to a story full of tension and diverse characters.

Detective Won-ho (CHO Jin-woong) is determined to catch the infamous leader of Asia's largest drug market, who is known only by the name "Mr. LEE". While tracking him, Won-ho apprehends and eventually conspires with Rak (RYU Jun-yeol), a lowly member of the drug cartel who seeks revenge against Mr. LEE.

The producers announced that the film shows a unique style. The intense action scenes and the beautiful mise-en-scène will create a unique synergy, never seen before in previous crime movies.

by SB Peter Bae (Film Journalist)



Herstory

2018 | TBA | Drama

DIRECTOR MIN Kyu-dong **CAST** KIM Hee-ae, KIM Hae-sook

RELEASE DATE Summer, 2018 **CONTACT** Contents Panda

Tel +82 2 3490 9372 **Fax** +82 2 515 1055 **Email** sales@its-new.co.kr

This is the newest title from director MIN Kyu-dong, who has been recognized for his detailed direction with *All About My Wife* (2012) and *The Most Beautiful Goodbye* (2011). *Herstory* follows the female victims who were brought to the Japanese army as "comfort women" and their journey through a legal fight. The movie is based on the real-life Shimonoseki Trials that have shaken the Japanese department of justice for the only time in its history. There were 23 hearings in the span of 6 years from 1992 to 1998. The trials took place between Shimonoseki and Busan, as the legal battle continued against the Japanese government. The film revolves around the true story of 10 elderly female plaintiffs and the people who fought together to win their case. As "history" is usually written from the male point of view, MIN Kyu-dong wanted to let women themselves tell a historical story. With "herstory", he clearly touches on the pains and sufferings of everyone. It also has a great cast. KIM Hee-ae of *C'est Si Bon* (2015) and *Thread of Lies* (2014) appears as MOON Jung-sook, the leader of the plaintiffs. With her strong leadership, her character will be able to create strong bonds and sympathy between the women. In addition, KIM Hae-sook of *The Handmaiden* (2016), *Assassination* (2015) and *The Thieves* (2012) took the role of BAE Jung-gil, a survivor who lived her life while hiding her sad story, but decides to stand up against the Japanese judiciary.

by SHIM Eun-ha

The Witness

2018 | TBA | Thriller

DIRECTOR CHO Kyu-jang

CAST LEE Sung-min, KIM Sang-ho, JIN Kyung, KWAK Si-yang

RELEASE DATE Summer, 2018 **CONTACT** Contents Panda

Tel +82 2 3490 9372 **Fax** +82 2 515 1055 **Email** sales@its-new.co.kr

A man unexpectedly witnesses a murder in an apartment complex, and his eyes meet with those of the murderer. *The Witness* is about the breathless chase that happens as he runs away from the murderer who saw him.

The murderer starts to search around the apartment complex to get rid of the only witness. As the murderer gets closer, the witness feels more threatened. Home, which is often believed to be the safest place, turns into a dangerous space.

Unrivalled talent LEE Sung-min, who performed in drama *Misaeng* (2014) and films *A Violent Prosecutor* (2016) and *The Sheriff In Town* (2017), stars as the protagonist, Sang-hoon. KIM Sang-ho plays Jae-yeop, a detective after the murderer, and previously appeared in *The Tiger* and *Proof of Innocence* (2016). JIN Gyeong of *Assassination* and *Veteran* (2015) is Sang-hoon's wife Su-jin, while KWAK Si-yang of *Familyhood* (2016) plays Tae-ho, the character at the center of the case. It's directed by *Mood of the Day* director, CHO Kyu-jang. *The Witness* is set in a residential space common and familiar to Koreans. Due to a murder witness and the murderer who saw the witness, the film creates an overwhelming sense of tension and induces realistic fear.

by JEONG Kyu-hwan (Film Journalist)



Little Big Pictures



Snatch Up

2018 | 101 min | Action, Drama

DIRECTOR HER Joon-hyung

CAST KIM Moo-yul, PARK Hee-soon, LEE Kyoung-young, JEON Gwang-ryol, LIM Won-hee, OH Jung-se, KIM Min-kyo

RELEASE DATE April 12, 2018 **CONTACT** Little Big Pictures

Tel +82 70 4447 6372 **Fax** +82 2263 8812 **Email** lsh@little-big.co.kr

All poor Min-je (KIM Moo-yul) has is his body. He even takes out his security deposit to pay for his mother's surgery but all of his money is snatched away by a thug named Ahn (KIM Min-kyo). Ahn gives all of the money to Mr. Baek (LIM Won-hee), a private loan shark, who then delivers it to Councilor Moon (JEON Gwang-ryol), a politician about to participate in an election. But Mr. Baek, who is sick of living a life of deficits, decides to hire Killer Park (LEE Kyoung-young) to get rid of Councilor Moon. When Detective Choi (PARK Hee-soon) loses his gun at a gambling house after pledging it as security, the gun is sent by Mr. Baek to Killer Park but the courier man (OH Jung-se) accidentally delivers the package to the person living next door to the killer... who happens to be Min-je. A story involving a bag of money that connects multiple characters is not an uncommon storyline for a crime movie and *Snatch Up* follows the recipe loyally. For very different reasons, an unemployed man, a private loan shark, a politician, a detective and a killer are all trying to get their hands on the same bag of money. Action and chase scenes are the main dishes in this film but *Snatch Up* does not lack elements of comedy.

by SB Peter Bae (Film Journalist)

Finecut



Champion

2018 | 108 min | Comedy, Human Drama

DIRECTOR KIM Yong-wan **CAST** Don LEE (MA Dong-seok), KWON Yul, HAN Ye-ri

RELEASE DATE May, 2018 **CONTACT** Finecut

Tel +82 2 569 8777 **Fax** +82 2 569 6662 **Email** cineinfo@finecut.co.kr

Don LEE (MA Dong-seok), who has emerged as one of the most sought after actors in Korea, is back with a new film. His previous work, *Train to Busan* (2016), reached 10 million viewers in Korea and was invited to the Cannes Film Festival, which earned him international fame and Hollywood's attention. He then firmly established himself as a popular star with last year's hit *The Outlaws*. In *Champion*, a Korean adoptee named Mark (Don LEE (MA Dong-seok)) dreams of becoming a world arm-wrestling champion. He gets tricked by sports agent Jin-ki (KWON Yul) who promises him a chance to make a lot of money and returns to his motherland.

As it was the case with *The Outlaws*, Don LEE (MA Dong-seok) took part in the planning process of the film as well as in its production. "After watching Sylvester Stallone's *Rocky* (1976) as a little boy, I became a fan of boxing. Ever since I saw *Over the Top* (1987), I've dreamed of making a film about arm-wrestling" he explained. His own experiences of racial discrimination, loneliness and family relations while living in the USA were very much reflected in the screenplay. From a tough guy lifting huge dumb-bells to a friendly man with lovely charms, Don LEE (MA Dong-seok) is a truly versatile actor.

by SB Peter Bae (Film Journalist)

Monstrum

2018 | In post-production | Historical drama, Monster

DIRECTOR HUH Jong-ho **CAST** KIM Myung-min, LEE Hye-ri, CHOI Woo-shik

RELEASE DATE Fall, 2018 **CONTACT** Finecut

Tel +82 2 569 8777 **Fax** +82 2 569 6662 **Email** cineinfo@finecut.co.kr

Monstrum is a monster film set during the Joseon Dynasty as a historical version of *The Host* (2006). The main idea behind the film came from a ghost story that was recorded in "The Annals of Jungjong". A plague has taken over the Joseon Kingdom, and fear runs in the streets. When rumors of a vicious beast roaming Mount Inwangsan called "Monstrum" begin to spread, the existing fear turns into panic. In order to quell the rising hysteria, Jungjong (PARK Hee-soon) calls back his most trusted general Yun Kyum (KIM Myung-min) from his retirement. Joined by his daughter Myung, his right-hand man Sung Han and royal court officer Hur, Yun Kyum engages in a mission to find the mysterious creature. Director HUH Jong-ho of *Countdown* (2011) and *The Advocate : A Missing Body* (2015) helmed this film. TAEWON ENTERTAINMENT who previously produced *71-Into The Fire* (2010) and *Operation Chromite* (2016) partnered with distribution company CINEGURU/KIDARIENT. *Detective K* (2011, 2015, 2018)'s KIM Myung-min, *Haeundae* (2009)'s KIM In-kwon, *Office* (2015)'s PARK Sung-woong, *The Pirates* (2014)'s LEE Kyoung-young, as well as *Okja* (2017)'s CHOI Woo-shik were cast in the film. Also on board is member of idol girl group Girl's Day and heroine of TV series *Reply 1988* LEE Hye-ri, who will make an appearance as KIM Myung-min's daughter.

by SB Peter Bae (Film Journalist)



High Society

2018 | 125 MIN | POLITICS, DRAMA

DIRECTOR BYUN Daniel H **CAST** PARK Hae-il, Su-ae, YOON Je-moon, RA Mi-ran

RELEASE DATE Fall, 2018 **CONTACT** Lotte Entertainment

Tel +82 2 3470 3534 **Fax** +82 2 3470 3549 **Email** international@lotte.net

High Society is a with high production value R-rated political thriller following in the footsteps of *The Taste of Money* (2012) and *Inside Men* (2015). A university professor named JANG Tae-jun (PARK Hae-il) dreams of going into politics, while his wife, OH Sur-yeon (Su-ae), the deputy curator of an art museum, wants to become a director. HAN Yong-seok (YOON Je-moon) is both a writer and the head of a conglomerate, and his wife LEE Hwa-ran (RA Mi-ran) is the current director of the same art museum. Everyone's desire to join the high society makes them confront each other. The principle of comparative advantage lies at the heart of the story. In fact, the film is about how runners-up desperately try to push their way into the first class world. *High Society* differs from other R-rated political thrillers in two aspects: it breaks free from the usual male-focused narrative mode through the character of Sur-yeon. Secondly, the selection of luxurious locations adds to the sophisticated tone of the film and illustrate its title perfectly. Hive Media Corp, which previously produced *Inside Men* (2015), have joined forces with director BYUN Daniel H., whose credits include *The Scarlet Letter* (2004).

by SHIM Eun-ha



Intimate Strangers

2018 | Comedy, Drama

DIRECTOR LEE JQ **CAST** YOO Hai-jin, CHO Jin-woong, LEE Seo-jin, YEOM Jung-a, KIM Ji-soo, SONG Ha-yoon

RELEASE DATE Fall, 2018 **CONTACT** Lotte Entertainment

Tel +82 2 3470 3534 **Fax** +82 2 3470 3549 **Email** international@lotte.net

"What would happen if we shared the entire content of our phones with others?" *Intimate Strangers* questions this hypothesis. LEE JQ, director of *The Fatal Encounter* (2014), signs with this new film a remake of Paolo Genovese's Italian hit *Perfect Strangers* (2016). A group of seven long-time friends sit down for dinner at Seok-ho's housewarming party. They think they know each other very well. During dinner, Ye-jin (KIM Ji-soo) suggests they play a new game where they are to place their phones on the table and share whatever calls or text messages they receive during the evening. What starts out as an innocent game soon takes an unexpected turn of events as secrets are forced out in the open. Mobile phones have become a necessity in modern times and store a huge amount of information. Our SIM cards pretty much carry our entire lives. What if those tiny chips started talking to us? It is an ingenious yet terrifying idea that text messages, calls and chat apps could reveal one's true face, making old friends lose their trust in each other. The impressive cast features YOO Hai-jin, star of *A Taxi Driver* (2017), and CHO Jin-woong whose credits include *The Handmaiden* (2016). LEE Seo-jin and SONG Ha-yoon, respectively known for their roles in TV program *Youn's kitchen* (2018) and TV show *Fight for My way* (2017), are also cast alongside.

by SB Peter Bae (Film Journalist)

M-Line Distribution



Feng Shui

2018 | TBD | Drama

DIRECTOR PARK Hee-gon

CAST CHO Seung-woo, JI Sung, KIM Sung-kyun, BAEK Yoon-sik, MOON Chae-won

RELEASE DATE September, 2018 **CONTACT** M-Line Distribution

Tel+82 796 2426 **Fax**+82 2 796 2429 **Email** sales@m-line-distribution.com

Following *The Face Reader* (2013) and *The Princess and the Matchmaker* (2018), *Feng Shui* completes the “Korean divination” trilogy. Based on the feng shui theories, or geomancy, the film depicts a feud between ambitious men over a propitious grave site said to be destined to produce future kings. The project took almost seven years of hard work. CHO Seung-woo, whose credits include *Inside Men* (2015) and *Assassination* (2015), leads the cast in the role of PARK Jae-sang, a top Joseon geomancer well-versed in all aspects of yin and yang including geomancy.

His character struggles to unearth the conspiracy of the powerful KIM Jua-geun and his son, portrayed by actor KIM Sung-kyun, as they try to maintain their authority. JI Sung plays the character of Heung-seon, whose ambition is to become a man of supreme power. In addition, MOON Chae-won, whose performance in the film *War of the Arrows* (2011) and the TV series *The Princess' Man* (2011) previously earned her the nickname ‘queen of period drama’ joins them as Chosun, the greatest gisaeng (korean geishas) in Seoul. The director, PARK Hee-gon, previously filmed *Perfect Game* (2011) and *Insadong Scandal* (2009).

by SB Peter Bae (Film Journalist)

Sunset in My Hometown

2018 | TBD | Drama

DIRECTOR LEE Joon-ik **CAST** PARK Jung-min, KIM Go-eun

RELEASE DATE July, 2018 **CONTACT** M-Line Distribution

Tel+82 2 796 2426 **Fax**+82 2 796 2429 **Email** sales@m-line-distribution.com

Acclaimed for his historical films including *The Throne* (2015), *DONGJU: The Portrait of A Poet* (2016) and *Anarchist from Colony* (2017), Director LEE Joon-ik is back with a piece set in modern times. In *Sunset in My Hometown*, an unacknowledged rapper named Hak-soo, for whom nothing seems to go well, receives a phone call and returns to his hometown, Byeon-san, to meet his elementary school friend Sun-mi. Seeing as the story involves music and is set in a small town, the film reminds us of LEE's 2006 film *Radio Star*. Indeed, in both films the protagonist, a musician, finds himself in a small provincial town. As expected of LEE's works, the film brings together elements of comedy and drama as well as references to the hip-hop world. Hip-hop is all about making introspective confessions and rappers tend to express social and relational disagreements based on their own experiences, healing themselves through such honest confessions. The same goes for rapper Hak-soo. He starts off as an immature man caught in his own victim mentality but ends up learning to confront his past. PARK Jung-min, highly praised for his performance in *DONGJU: The Portrait of A Poet* incarnates Hak-soo, and Sun-mi is played by KIM Go-eun, known for her roles in TV series *Goblin: The Lonely and Great God* and *Cheese in the Trap*. The film's use of Jeolla dialect is another point to look out for.

by SHIM Eun-ha



Showbox



Dark Figure of Crime

2018 | TBD | Thriller

DIRECTOR KIM Tae-gyoon **CAST** KIM Yoon-seok, JU Ji-hoon

RELEASE DATE TBD **CONTACT** Showbox

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Dark Figure of Crime is a crime thriller centered on a fierce battle of minds between a detective and an imprisoned murderer who confesses to six new murders. The term 'dark figure of crime' is employed by criminologists to describe crimes that remain undiscovered or unreported even though there are victims. KIM Yoon-seok, the star of *The Yellow Sea* (2010) and *1987: When the Day Comes* (2017) has been cast as KIM Hyung-min, a detective who doggedly uncovers the truth behind hidden murders. We look forward to seeing him in a detective role once again after *The Chaser* (2008) and *The Classified File* (2015). JU Ji-hoon plays KANG Tae-oh, an imprisoned serial killer who engages in an intense psychological warfare with the detective. In *Asura: The City of Madness* (2016), he played a man whose nature could be described as both good and evil, and proved himself a versatile actor with his recent performance in *Along with the Gods: the Two Worlds* (2017). JIN Seon-kyu, who drew much attention for his role in last year's hit *The Outlaws* joins the cast as Detective Cho. The screenplay has been co-written by KWAK Kyung-Taek, the director of *The Classified File* (2015) and *Friend* (2001) and the film's director KIM Tae-gyoon whose credits include *Spring, Snow* (2012).

by JEONG Kyu-hwan (Film Journalist)

Money

2018 | TBD | Crime Drama

DIRECTOR PARK Noo-ri **CAST** RYU Jun-yeol, YOO Ji-tae

RELEASE DATE TBD **CONTACT** Showbox

Tel +82 2 3218 5640 **Email** sales@showbox.co.kr

Money is based on JANG Hyun-do's novel of the same title which has captured the hearts of many readers with its sharp critique of financial circles and its fast-paced narrative. The author, who used to be a corporate broker himself, explains: 'The law of the jungle dictates that the top 1% rules over the remaining 99%. I wanted to present a raw portrayal of our struggles in this world.' A novice broker named Il-hyun (RYU Jun-yeol) dreams of succeeding in the stock market. However, he is in reality timid and lacks connections, and so all he can do is lament over the low incentives he receives. One day, he finds out about a mysterious man known as 'The Ticket' (YOO Ji-tae), and learns that anyone collaborating with him is instantly guaranteed huge profits. Thus the lure of big money attracts an ordinary young man.

This directorial debut from PARK Noo-ri, who worked as an assistant director for *The Unjust* (2010) and *The Berlin File* (2013), has been co-produced by director YOON Jong-bin and HAN Jae-duk, the president of SANAI Pictures who was the executive producer for YOON's *KUNDO: Age of the Rampant* (2014). The bitcoin fever sweeping across the world reminds us once again of the powerful lure of money. *Money* seems to issue a warning against such dangers. We look forward to seeing how realistically the film portrays ingenious tricks and strategies of the stock market. ㊦

by SB Peter Bae (Film Journalist)



In the Hope of Introducing the Hollywood System



KIM Tae-seong
Composer

When he first started out, KIM Tae-seong was known as 'the youngest music director'. Since his debut as a music director in his early 20s, KIM has worked on over 60 films, working tirelessly and releasing an average of five to six pieces a year. He has been in charge of some of the most successful Korean films soundtracks these past few years and has received several awards for his work but still takes the time to collaborate on small-scale independent film projects.

FILMOGRAPHY

Major Works

1987: When the Day Comes (2017),
Steel Rain (2017)
The Phantom Detective (2016)
HAN Gong-ju (2014)
Bedevilled (2010)

Award-winning Works

The Priests (2015)
Roaring Currents (2014)
War of the Arrows (2011)
Cyrano Agency (2010)
Crossing (2008)

How would you define the role of a soundtrack?

In the early stages of my career, I thought all I had to do was find good melodies or music that matched particular scenes. I used to stir up trouble on set because my sole focus was making music. As I became more recognised for my work on films, getting positive responses and winning prizes, I underwent a change and came to realise that I was a cineaste above all. Creating soundtracks involves a certain amount of strategic planning and directing, that is why I must consider how best to fulfil the director's wishes as well as the audience's expectations. I also keep up with current music trends so I tend to pay more attention to how scenes or moments are connected.

You've worked on an enormous number of films. Do you consider yourself a workaholic?

I tend to get nervous when I'm not working and I do not go out very often. Over the years, I've spent most of my time in my studio, unaware that I was burying myself in my work. I don't know where the past ten years of my life have gone and still feel like I'm in my 20s. For some of my very early works, I had to step in to help fill the shoes of other musicians who'd been fired. In those cases, I would be given a week or two to complete the project and such extreme time constraints put a lot of mental and physical pressure on me. Once, a blood vessel in my neck burst and I had to be hospitalised. Another time, I nearly had a car accident because of a temporary loss of sight I suffered due to overworking. I'm relieved that I don't have to substitute for others much these days. I've also recently taken up yoga in order to build my mental strength.

In addition to the major mainstream films you've worked on, I notice that there are also some small, independent projects listed in your filmography.

Actually, my personal taste lies far from the mainstream movies. I like B-movies or movies from female directors like Sarah Polley and Miranda July. Such preferences have led me to participate in independent film projects or projects with unique topics. In Korea, a great deal of monitoring is done when it comes to large-scale film projects, which frequently results in something very different from what I originally planned to make. When that happens, I cannot help feeling ashamed of myself. Working on an independent film allows me to find relief from all that. The experience of discussing the film with the director directly and intimately becomes a true healing time for me. Films like *HAN Gong-*

ju (2014) and *Bedevilled* (2010) brought me that experience.

In Korea, how is the process of creating a film soundtrack broken down?

The process of making a film soundtrack is very complicated. In Hollywood, the composers, music editors, arrangers, orchestrators and sound designers would be working separately but in Korea the whole process is managed as one big task. The person in charge of music is also responsible for managing the budget and overseeing the project. For example, if you need to record an orchestra and there's no budget set aside for it, then you will have to bear the expense with your own money, to pay the price of being overly ambitious. The vision I carry is to introduce Hollywood's advanced soundtrack producing system and adapt it to the Korean market. To that end, my top priority is to ensure that we give credit where credit is due. In reality, in a Korean film, a specific person is singled out to take credit for music. However, it is highly unlikely that this person was the one composing the score. In most cases, this person would probably be only working as a music editor. This current system that exploits the actual composers and even omits their names in the credits must be fixed.

In addition to giving credit where it's due, time constraints are another urgent matter.

Before, I used to have to make music without even watching the film, but that is hardly the case anymore. But time is always tight. For most commercial films, I only get about three weeks after the editing is locked. In order to make it on time, I must read the script and watch rough cuts on set in advance so that I can have music ready to update. With independent films, I have more time to improve the project to completion but the more commercial the film is, the smaller my role becomes. It's always important to secure enough time to do my best in the post-production stage.

Where do you usually find inspiration?

I try to watch, hear and experience things as much as I can. Recently, I've been greatly inspired by my conversations with several film directors. Fundamentally, I think the most important source of inspiration is sincerity. It's important to sit down every day and accept to progress little by little. In the end, that kind of hard work helps me find inspiration. The rest is quite secondary. ㉸

by LEE Yong Cheol (Film Critic) | photographed by OH Kye-ohk

The Process of Giving Life to the Text

LEE Jae-sung Production Designer of SEVEN YEARS OF NIGHT

The film adaption of bestselling novel *Seven Years of Night* has been highly anticipated, especially since CHOO Chang-min, the director in charge, recorded over ten million admissions with his previous film *Masquerade* (2012). In addition to the director's interesting new interpretation of the story, the visual embodiment of the novel's fictional places immediately stood out and Seryeong Village itself came alive as another protagonist in the film. The design was done at the hands of production designer LEE Jae-sung. Although this is his third commercial film project after *The Shameless* (2015) and *DONGJU: The Portrait of A Poet* (2016), LEE has been working in the field for ten years and is a highly regarded production designer. He started out under PARK Il-hyeon, one of the most celebrated production designers in Korean cinema, and gradually built his reputation through hard work.

Tell us about the production design's theme for *Seven Years of Night*.

Many people must have pictured Seryeong Village in their own minds when they read the novel so no doubt the fans of the book would want to see for themselves how the places in the story were visually embodied on the big screen, which would lead to inevitable comparisons. This put a lot of pressure on me as the production designer. The key was to create a universal image that everyone could identify with. For that reason, I focused on expanding and reinterpreting the general feeling of the locations in the text rather than following faithfully the detailed descriptions of the original novel.

Both a dam and a reservoir appear in the film. What big scale elements did you have to create?

The machine room where OH Young-je and CHOI Hyun-su have a fight in towards the end of the film is a good example of a big decor. The set was actually created on top of the Daecheong Dam. When I first visited the dam, I was struck by the sight of those massive floodgates and started thinking about how I could incorporate that image into the



The concept art of the submerged village.

film. In reality, at night, the top of the dam is no different from a two-lane road. However, by elevating the building of the machine room by two floors, I was able to show the dam's unique spatial features in three dimensions. On top of the dam, which is as high as a 25-story apartment, I constructed a two-story building. Taking into consideration the importance of ensuring a good balance with the existing structure and the set's safety measures, I opted for the same type of H-beams used for the Daecheong Dam.

The image of the submerged village is very impressive. How did you embody it through production design?

The part they walk through was a set and the rest of the frame was CG work. The set was constructed inside a water tank and designing it alone took me about two months. In the end, due to budget constraints, I could only make about 20% of what I had in mind. It's what I personally regret the most.

In contemporary films, it's difficult to tell real sets and CG apart. In *Seven Years of Night*, can you give me examples of CG work that looks like real sets and vice versa?

There is a scene at the dock where Seung-hwan stares at Hyun-su from afar as he throws something away from the intake tower. Many people thought we had built the dock so that it would be easy to shoot and added the distant intake tower with CG but actually the dock was constructed at a spot that offered the best view of the tower. We had to build the intake tower too. There was already a tower but its modern design didn't quite match the tone of the film so we refurbished its exterior and created a new set. As for computer-generated images that look like part of the production design, the best example is the scene towards the end of the film of Hyun-su climbing the dam on a ladder. Although necessary for the scene, we couldn't install a ladder like that so we only made a 5m-long ladder and shot the scene against a green screen. The rest of the scene was completed by our CG team after that.

Who is responsible for deciding what will be done in physical sets or in CGI?

It's a collaboration. Based on the overall theme or space design suggested by the production design team, both teams share ideas and discuss the most effective way to embody it. And through this process it becomes clear what each team should be responsible for.

Could you talk about the process in production design?

At first, you must analyse the script. Once you've decided on a basic theme through this process, you can start designing the space. From this stage, it's important to communicate with the director and other staff members as well as keep modifying and improving the space design. Once the space design is done, it's time to bring it to life. All this is what a production design team normally goes through. The duration depends on the scale of each project but it normally takes about three months, more or less.

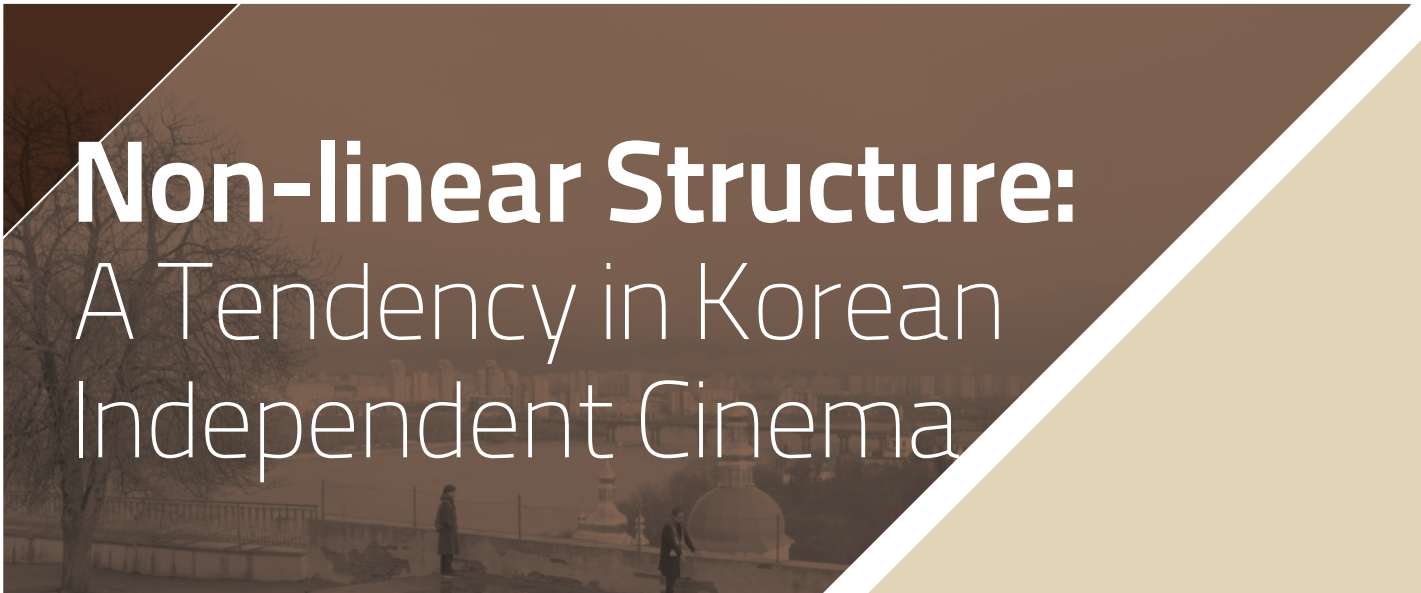
Which recent film stood out for you in terms of production design?

The Shape of Water. Not only did I find the film's production design and mode of expression effective but I was also very impressed by the fact that Sally Hawkins and Richard Jenkins were neighbours with only a wall between them. That was an interesting idea.

What would you say is the role of production design in a film?

It builds the concept of the film from start to finish. ㉸

by SHIM Eun-ha



Non-linear Structure: A Tendency in Korean Independent Cinema

In the history of cinema, films with a revolutionary structure have been around since the beginning. Normally, it is expected that a general structure comes first, which is then later overturned by a new approach. However, the invention of cinema in the late 19th century had little to do with the general 'narrative structure'. Rather, cinematic development has come to define the narrative structure that audiences are familiar with. Now that we're in the third century of the history of cinema, it may seem rather out of place to discuss films with a unique structure. Therefore, the scope of this essay is limited to Korean independent cinema in the 21st century. This gives rise to an important question: 'How come Korean independent cinema has not seen a structural revolution?' This seems particularly strange in comparison with other Asian countries. The Art Theatre Guild (AGT) which spearheaded the Japanese New Wave already had its heyday decades ago, and it's been a long time since some remarkable, unique masterpieces came out from the Philippines and Thailand, two previously unknown lands in the world of international cinema. One of the biggest reasons for this gap is Korean cinema's fundamental failure to move away from realism. Secondly, because in the early days of Korean independent cinema the primary focus was very much on social reform and activism, stories inevitably took

precedence over styles or themes. However, this is not to say that there are no films with an original structure in Korean independent cinema.

The Challenges of Korean Independent Cinema in the 21st Century

The works of brothers KIM Gok and KIM Sun, who began releasing short and feature films following the advent of the 21st century, are good examples. Of their many works including *Geo-Lobotomy* (2005) and *Exhausted* (2009), we must pay close attention to *Capitalist Manifesto: Working Men of All Countries, Accumulate* (2003). This film explores the reality of capitalism in Korea from a completely upturned perspective. Indeed, it reveals that even when upturned, the monster known as capitalism remains the same. KIM Kyung-mook, the director of *Faceless Things* (2005) and *Stateless Things* (2012), was one of the pioneers of the technique known as 'dividing a film into two', where a film is divided into two (or sometimes more) sections in order for related things to be linked together. There are yet more names that we must mention. BAE Yong-kyoon has long been silent since releasing *The People in White* (1997), a film that depicts Korea's early modern history from an exile's point of view. ROH Gyeong-tae is best known for his works *The Last*



Jane



Dining Table (2008) and *Land of Scarecrows* (2009), and the latter ventures into the unfamiliar subject matter of legacy and the environment. Under HONG Sangsoo's influence, LEE Kwang-guk created his own world in *Romance Joe* (2012) and *A Matter of Interpretation* (2015). KIM Dong-ju directed *A Broom Becomes a Goldfish* (2010), a crime thriller switching between reality and surrealism. Added to the list are documentary filmmakers whose recent works convey their concerns with aestheticism: LEE Kang-hyun, IM Heung-soon and JUNG Jae-hoon.

Jane: Between Reality and Dream

Compared to the works by the directors mentioned above, Korean independent films of the last two or three years, though unique in structure, do not show revolutionary changes. If anything, they retain the energy derived from earlier masterpieces and form a happier relationship with both critics and audiences (For this reason, they can only be deemed to have generated 'a tendency' as mentioned in the title of the essay rather than a proper change). Upon its release last year, *Jane* (2017) attracted tens of thousands of viewers. The mixing of different times warns us from the start that it is not an easy film to watch. Divided into three main parts, this film is almost impossible to fully

understand. The simplest interpretation would be to regard the first section as a fantasy, an extended vision of what the abandoned girl sees as she commits suicide. Yet the realistic and desperate portrayal of characters and incidents does not allow such a simplistic and empty interpretation of the film. The first part of the film links up with the second part to serve faithfully as 'a lost paradise'. Even after we've managed to clarify the connections between these different parts, there are still missing pieces in the puzzle such as the development of events or the repeated appearances of some characters. Regardless, it is not difficult to figure out the theme of *Jane*: how can those regarded as outsiders even in the world of outsiders live on amongst strangers? They stand next to us as victims driven into corners by society's violence, not as people who cannot be accepted. No other film befits the expression 'sweet sorrow' better. CHO Hyun-hoon conjures up a beautiful world by carrying out illogical, complex rituals.

Jamsil: A Visit from the Past

In *Jamsil* (2018), the characters receive a visit from the past. This is the quickest way to explain how Sungsook and Mihee, two women almost ten years apart in age, meet for the first time. One day Mihee comes to Sungsook's apartment and introduces herself as 'a close friend from childhood'. While



scenes in the past showing teenagers use warm, brownish colours, scenes in the present are boldly devoid of colors. Almost in monochrome, the present is cold and expressionless. Sungsook and her long-term boyfriend Ik-joo have drifted apart, and Mihee struggles to find energy to keep going after studying for the national exam for over ten years. Where they live is as barren and empty as their lonely minds. A visit by Yooyoung from the past makes the three characters look anew at their passionless existence. Yooyoung intervenes with the three but it is never explained how that is done. Similarly, as if there were no order in the stepping stones of time placed far apart, the past and the present are mixed up. Having been swept up in time's violence before, Sungsook and Mihee now set out to find their true selves in the midst of the confusing passage of time. The film concentrates on revealing the characters' bare faces rather than presenting one incident after another. For this reason, the discussions and performances featured in the film do not contribute to the plot. Therefore, the film may seem unfriendly to those who prefer strong narratives. We can only travel to Jamsil by following the series of unexpected stories.

Alone: A Recurring Nightmare

Starting with the sound of a murderer's heavy breathing and

from a first-person perspective, PARK Hong-min's *Alone* (2016) is reminiscent of Philippe Grandrieux's *Sombre* (1998). Both films show constant movement and form narrative out of inner landscape. Yet *Alone* differs from *Sombre* in that it cannot escape from the space it is bound to. It is not surprising that the two films treat space differently. While *Sombre* depicts a serial killer on the move, *Alone* is about a man who circles around a particular death. The murderer dreams that he gets killed by a stranger. This recurring nightmare torments him and every time he wakes up from it, he finds himself in an alleyway in the neighboring district. He has long been preparing to make a documentary film about the nearby redevelopment zone. That district reminds him of his own experience in a shanty town during the 1970s. The story of an abusive father, a mother who took her own life out of despair, and a son who killed his own father, clings to his mind like a never-ending night. That tragedy in the shantytown in the past - is it an excuse he conjures up to seek forgiveness for the murder he committed? Or is it just a story he creates to understand death in real life? The nightmare of a creator or of a man stuck between dream and reality continues even towards the end of the film. The echoing sounds increase the fear caused by the man's nightmare that imprisons him. The sounds of his heavy breathing, sobs and footsteps all resonate



The King of the Border



Alone

through the alleys, thereby creating a huge space of sounds.

The King of the Border: Between Unfamiliarity and Familiarity

The King of the Border (2017) is another black comedy from LIM Jung-hwan following his previous work *Laos: In the Warmest Country* (2014), where a group of filmmakers travels abroad and takes us to Poland and Ukraine. Divided into two parts, the film's first half unfolds stories imagined by two filmmakers, Eugene and Hyunchul (CHO Hyun-chul plays both Hyunchul and Dongchul), who arrive in Poland on the same day. Hyunchul lives with Eun-gyeong, but dreams of an impossible romance with Eugene. Eugene creates a peculiar crime story based on people she meets in Poland. If you thought the film's second half where Eugene visits Eun-gyeong and Hyunchul in their home was real, then you've been deceived. LIM Jung-hwan once again plays the role of a trickster and, without even batting an eyelash, fools us into believing that fiction is reality. We witness absurd deals being made, someone going blind, someone dying, and someone wandering around. Even back in reality, LIM Jung-hwan's story of encountering a ghost in a dreamy state continues. The complexity of his story means we could easily get lost if we lose concentration even for a moment. For his

free-spirited narrative style, LIM Jung-hwan is comparable to Alain Guiraudie and Miguel Gomes. That the final visit in the film takes us to the gravesite of Krzysztof Kieslowski is yet another trap. That's what LIM Jung-hwan is like.

Autumn, Autumn: The Same Places but Different Times

JANG Woo-jin, a director based in Gangwon Province, made *Autumn, Autumn*, which loosely employs the aforementioned technique of 'dividing a film into two'. In terms of style, the second half shows a hint of influence from HONG Sangsoo's early film *The Power of Kangwon Province* (1998). The first half of the film follows the story of Ji-hyeon, a young man who returns to Chuncheon after attending a job interview in Seoul. To him, Chuncheon is both his hometown and a place he can't get away from. He spends a few days to overcome his failure to find employment, meeting up with friends and helping out at the restaurant run by his friend's mother. About 35 minutes into the 78-minute long film, the screen goes black and the title *Autumn, Autumn* finally comes up. When the film takes us back to Chuncheon, Ji-hyeon is gone and we're presented with the story of the middle-aged couple who sat next to him earlier on his train to Chuncheon. For two nights and three days, they visit the same places as Ji-hyeon by chance, thereby sharing with him the same



spaces and times. The journeys of the three characters run parallel in a chronological order and create a vague antithesis. As a result, the same places take on completely different appearances. Ji-hyeon sees Chuncheon as a place of everyday life, but to the couple it is nothing more than a tourist place ideal for their affair. The city is undergoing a lot of redevelopment and is currently hosting a marathon. In the midst of different places in Chuncheon, including the Buddhist temple on the other side of the lake, some people get on with life and some people take a stroll. While Ji-hyeon and his friends share distressing conversations about having to give up on their dreams, the couple fills their time with idle talks. Their times and spaces are painted with different colors so as to highlight this discrepancy. Ji-hyeon's Chuncheon is vivid green, calm and cold, whereas the couple's Chuncheon is yellowish and light-hearted in tune with their silly footsteps. As a matter of course, Ji-hyeon stays and the couple departs to go back to a different place. The film feels like a sketch of a few days out of daily life, but nonetheless leaves a lasting impression.

Anxiety, Loss, Sorrow, Freedom and Diversity

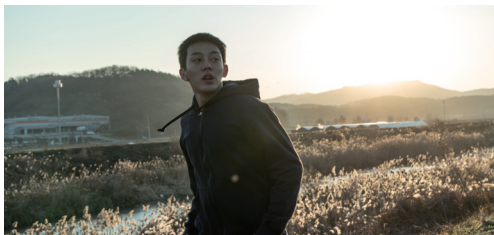
The five films mentioned above can roughly be grouped together as films with unique, non-linear structures, but

there are more stylistic differences and similarities. While such differences are found in the outer structure, the inner world or psychology of characters is firmly anchored in anxiety. Most of the characters are at the starting point of their life, a time fraught with mild fevers of anxiety. But there's more to it. They are roaming. If the older generation takes pride in their hard work and conscientiousness throughout their ordinary lives, the characters' generation gives the impression that they are driven away and scattered. In Seoul's dark corners or in Europe's cold streets at night, they roam. Someone even wanders about the alleys of his own neighborhood every night. It is no wonder that this lost, roaming generation suffers anxiety. Their sorrows and sense of loss are shared across the five films by contemporary auteurs. These films believe that the old mode of expression is frustrating and cannot possibly convey the anxiety of their generation. That's why the films themselves roam. *Jane, Jamsil, Alone, The King of the Border* and *Autumn, Autumn* show how free and diverse such roaming films can be. Anxiety, loss, sorrow, freedom and diversity are the new blood types emerging from this recent tendency in Korean Independent Cinema in the 21st century. The fresh blood of today's Korean youths runs through the five films. ㊦

by LEE Yong Cheol (Film Critic)

KOREAN FILMS in CANNES 2018

FESTIVAL DE CANNES 8-19 MAY 2018



Competition

BURNING

DIRECTOR
LEE Chang-dong



Midnight Screenings

THE SPY GONE NORTH

DIRECTOR
YOON Jong-bin



Critics' Week

EXEMPLARY CITIZEN

DIRECTOR
KIM Cheol-hwi



After *ALONG WITH THE GODS*: *THE TWO WORLDS*, Who Will Take Over the Throne?

Six Big Korean Projects of 2018





Along with the Gods: The Two Worlds dominated theaters at the end of 2017, and reached the box-office podium as the second best performing title of all time in Korea. Regarding production costs, both parts of the series cost USD 40 million dollars. Which title in 2018 will be able to take the crown?

The list of titles lined up to be released in Korean cinemas in 2018 is substantial. 13 films cost over USD 10 million to produce and this number raises to 20 if we include the marketing costs in the total production costs of USD 10 million. Period pieces, action movies, fantasy films, SF and other genres will be represented. Among those highly anticipated films, the adaptation of a popular novel, two large-scale historical dramas, two big titles on inter-Korean relations and one blockbuster chosen by leading South Korean actor, SONG Kang-ho. With the return of many highly anticipated directors and the diversity in film genres that they offer, the theaters will most likely remain the place to be in 2018.

by SHIM Eun-ha



CHOO Chang-min

SEVEN YEARS OF NIGHT

CAST RYU Seung-ryong, JANG Dong-gun,
SONG Sae-byuk, KO Kyoung-pyo
DISTRIBUTOR CJ Entertainment

Is there really such evil?

Seven Years of Night is the latest film from CHOO Chang-min, the director of *Masquerade* (2012), which recorded over 12 million admissions. It is the director's first feature film in six years. Based on JEONG You-jeong's bestselling novel of the same name and starring JANG Dong-gun and RYU Seung-ryong, two of the most prominent actors of Korean cinema today, the film has been drawing much attention right from the start. Inevitably, its delayed release gave rise to many rumours. Upon its release, the film became the talk of the town and caused much controversy among critics and viewers alike.

we shot on location. One of the best examples of this is the scene in which the village gets flooded.

RYU Seung-ryong and JANG Dong-gun, two top stars of Korean cinema, appear on screen together for the first time. Please tell us about the casting process.

RYU Seung-ryong read the original novel and really liked it. He expressed his enthusiasm for the project from an early stage, and I welcomed the chance to work with him again. RYU's acting in *Masquerade* was superb, and I have much respect for him. While I was still considering who to pick for the opposite role of OH Young-je, I heard that JANG Dong-gun was interested in the project. I thought it'd be a good opportunity to discover another side of this handsome actor, and so I met with him. In order to counter his image as a polite and nice person and turn him into a bad guy that would turn people off, I made a number of suggestions. And since JANG was also looking for a change, he responded with enthusiasm.

The location plays a major role in the movie. How did the filming go?

The village, where the major incidents take place, is itself another protagonist of the film. In order to bring out the unique atmosphere of each different place like the reservoir, the dam and the residential area, I divided them broadly into three separate areas. It took a considerable amount of time to travel from one location to another, but I simply couldn't give up on filming at the locations that corresponded the most to my idea. Of course, there always was the possibility of using CG to create some scenes, but that wouldn't have conveyed the feel I was after. Instead, I chose to apply CG directly onto the real background images

Seven Years of Night is an extremely dark story, especially when compared to your previous works that were cheerful and light-hearted.

The original novel follows the perspective of each of the main characters, which poses many difficulties for a film adaptation. Not only is the book very long and complex, but the personality of each character also makes it difficult to empathize. That's why at first, I didn't want to step in as director, but I had a change of heart. Whereas my previous films, *Late Blossom*, *Lost in Love* and *Mapado: Island of Fortunes*, focused on the good in people, I wanted to explore the dark side of evil. After that, adapting the novel into a screenplay turned out to be more difficult than I'd expected, it took me about two years.

Unlike the mood of the story or the atmosphere in the film, the subject is not tragic.

The film emphasises the way a man with a dark and painful past tries to overcome his tragic legacy. His future may not be bright and promising, but I still root for him to find the will to go on and move forward. This idea is reflected in the way the film's title appears on a black background in the beginning and then on a white background in the end.

The two wives who play key roles in the original novel have disappeared in the film adaptation.

In the original novel, OH Young-je's wife, Ha-young, plays a significant role in the last chapters. However, because I understood Young-je to be a man who would dictate his own destiny without someone else's intervention, I decided it would be out of character for him to be influenced by his wife. For that reason, I did away with the character of Ha-young. On the other hand, I regret that I couldn't fully explore the character of Eun-ju, CHOI Hyun-su's wife. In the original novel, she is very attached to life and has an interesting storyline. But it would have taken another film altogether to deal with everything. Choosing what to keep and what to lose was a very difficult task.

The film tells a complex and vast story. The editing work must have been difficult.

Initially, the script was too long; it contained over 140 scenes. The first time I edited the film, it was nearly three hours long. I realised I couldn't explain the characters' past and emotions in every detail. Instead of explaining



Seven Years of Night

everything, I wanted to leave it to the audience to take it in and follow the story in their own way. My idea was to lead the spectator to construct a story of their own from diverse perspectives, as if reading an epic novel.

How was your relationship with JEONG You-jeong, the author of the original novel?

We met and exchanged greetings before the shooting began but that was it. Her only request was that the title shouldn't be changed, that and nothing else. Because of the book's massive popularity, I was apprehensive about the author's response to its film adaptation. She saw the film and found it to be rather good. She appreciates the visual depiction of the story, and even enjoys the changes made to the plot towards the end as part of the cinematic reinvention.

by LEE Yong Cheol (Film Critic) | photographed by OH Kye-ohk

P O I N T

The Original Novel at the Source of the Story

Seven Years of Night, written by JEONG You-jeong, has recently been reprinted for the 100th time. Since its publication in 2011, more than half a million people have enjoyed reading this thriller. The book portrays a man who gets driven to destruction after he accidentally commits a murder and explores the delicate line between good and evil through a careful analysis of the human mind. Following the book's publication, the author received offers from 15 different film companies. There was a great deal of enthusiasm regarding the book's film adaptation as it was once voted the number 1 book people wanted to see turned into a movie.



KIM Kwang-sik

THE GREAT BATTLE

CAST ZO In-sung, NAM Joo-hyuk, PARK Sung-woong

DISTRIBUTOR Next Entertainment World

A Period Piece certainly, but a War Film above all

The Great Battle reenacts the fierce 88-day battle led by YANG Manchun (ZO In-sung), the commander of the Ansi Fortress, against the Emperor Taizong of the Tang dynasty in the year 640. Despite having an army six times smaller than the Emperor's, YANG led his soldiers to victory by way of a clever manoeuvre, taking advantage of the strategic location of the fortress. This battle became an important episode in East Asia's History. Director KIM Kwang-sik, whose filmography includes *My Dear Desperado* (2010) and *Tabloid Truth* (2014), takes with this film his first shot at filming a period piece. With a total production cost of KRW 18 billion, *The Great Battle* definitely stands out as a unique blockbuster project.

What interested you in talking about YANG Manchun's victory?

Historically, at that time, all battles and diplomatic relations were related to YEON Gaesomun, a powerful military dictator in the waning days of Goguryeo, one of the three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea. It was very unlikely that a General at the border like YANG Manchun could make a name for himself but he successfully repelled the attack of TANG Taizong, who was one of the most powerful emperors at the time. I find that story really intriguing. I'm fascinated by the character of YANG Manchun who, without any help from the state, had to protect the fortress from a

Chinese invasion as well as prove he was not a traitor.

There are very few Korean films that chronicle Goguryeo's battles. It must have been difficult for you to find relevant material.

The only thing I could find about the Ansi Fortress battle was this: 'Emperor Tang Taizong, conquerer of the world, fought at Ansi Fortress and was defeated.' I had to fill in the blanks using my own imagination to make this film, like some kind of restoration work. The core of the battle was the fortress' siege and that's why I focused my research on battles where castles had to be defended, from the Goguryeo era to the

Joseon dynasty. I also looked at similar cases in Western history. The pre-production alone took me about a year.

Along with *The Fortress* that was released last year, big-scale, historical action films have been on the rise lately. What sets *The Great Battle* apart from other films?

I approached the film as a 'historical action movie'. Although the story is set in the past, it's very much a war film. Previously made historical action films would focus, for the most part, on characters and would unveil the battle scenes towards the end, but in this film, the characters are dropped in the midst of the war. When I was writing the script, I spent a great deal of time thinking about how to embody those characters caught up in the war, and tried to convey what could happen to people should they come to face a war situation.

How is Ansi Fortress depicted in the film?

During pre-production, I visited the remains of the Ansi Fortress in Manchuria. Historical records describe it as an impregnable fortress surrounded by mountains but in reality, what is assumed to have been Ansi Fortress stands on a flat land with low walls. It is unlikely that this place would have lasted a day against a foreign invasion. The purpose of the film does not lie in ascertaining historical evidence as realistically as possible but in portraying Goguryeo Era's spirit. That's why the fortress in the film is designed to show some of the most unique characteristics of Goguryeo. I referred to the Hwando Fortress, constructed during the reign of King Yuri, to design Ansi. Although originally built to protect, it retained a few offensive features that corresponded perfectly to the historical descriptions of the Ansi Fortress. The outside of the citadel was designed in the style of Goguryeo's *ongseong* (curved guard bastions), which means it is protected on three sides by piled up rocks in the way of Scottish cliffs.

Depicting the battle at Yodong Fortress must have been a great challenge. I believe it is key to the film's success.

There are four big battle scenes in total – a large-scale action sequence involving people on horseback, 2-3 sieges, and the final battle – and each one of them is based on a different concept. There were 30-40 horses and over 200 extras present every day on the set. Even though it's a period film, I wanted to give it a modern feel so I had recourse to a lot of special artillery equipment.



The Great Battle

Along with ZO In-sung in the lead role, you worked with a relatively young cast that includes PARK Sung-woong (YI Se-min), NAM Joo-hyuk (Samul) and UM Tae-goo (Paso).

According to actual historical records, YEON Gaesomun was 38 years old when he came to power. YI Se-min was 40 and YANG Manchun in his early 30s. The idea was to make a war film set in a past era but with a focus on young people. There was hardly any information on YANG Manchun, except for the fact that he was a commander at the frontier and that he was on bad terms with YEON Gaesomun. I created the character from there and adjusted his way of speech and other characteristics after consulting with ZO In-sung.

by LEE Hwa-jung (Film Journalist) | photographed by OH Kye-ohk

P O I N T

All About the Siege

The film opens with a combat scene between YEON Gaesomun and Emperor TANG Taizong. Both the climax and the finale consist of battle scenes as well. At the heart of the film, the Ansi Fortress, and the core of this war, the siege. The visual implementation of the military blockade is certainly a new experience as a wide range of weapons rarely seen before, including dozens of siege towers taller than the walls of the fortress, catapults and battle rams especially, guarantee a feast for the eyes. The combat attires are also quite different from what we're used to see in usual period films. The memorable scene where men and horses wearing iron armor charge on the enemy will, for sure, leave a great impression on audiences.



KIM Sung-hoon

RAMPANT

CAST JANG Dong-gun, HYUN Bin

DISTRIBUTOR Next Entertainment World

Mission:

To Make an Exhilarating Action Film

The Kingdom of Joseon is plagued with mysterious creatures known as 'night demons' endangering the lives of the common people. While the throne is jeopardized by political conflicts, the fate of the Kingdom is left in the hands of a character named Lee Cheung (HYUN Bin), who does not seem fit to be a hero. After *Confidential Assignment* (2017), set in a contemporary Korea fraught with tension between North and South, *Rampant* marks another collaboration between director KIM Sung-hoon and HYUN Bin, this time using a social conflict in the Joseon era as background.

Rampant tells the story of people trying to get free from 'night demons', a component of horror films, but this one is set in the Joseon era. Where did you get the idea for this new film?

I was at a scenario meeting one day when someone from a distribution company shared a very brief story about zombie-like creatures appearing in a royal palace. The zombie creatures have been widely explored and subjected to variations over time so I wanted to give them a new look under the name of 'night demons' and connect them with social issues.

The title of the film in Korean can be understood in various ways. It could mean "the spread of an epidemic" or could hint at the start of a new world.

It's because we came up with that title during the planning meeting that I decided to take on the role of director for this project (laughs). The title instantly helped me get the hang of it, so to speak. The premise of the story brings together such disparate elements as the Kingdom of Joseon and the night demons. Spatially and visually, the story takes place in a world we've never come across before but at the same time Koreans are already quite familiar with the



Rampant

social hierarchy of the Joseon era. Therefore, instead of taking a classic approach, I wondered if I could introduce characters who seek good leadership and a new world for themselves in this existing world.

I heard the shooting was mostly done at night. I am looking forward to seeing the film's action sequences.

You won't find the kind of speedy, big-scale action of Hollywood films in this one. Instead, the action sequences are more realistic and have a more intense three-dimensional effect. I suggested to my action director that he use as few shots as possible and refrain from including the all so common sword action.

Why did you decide not to include any sword action?

Generally speaking, when you have a swordfight in a film, the movements of the swords are only expressed in terms of lines. But in *Rampant*, I take a more modern approach to action, where each and every movement is closely observed. What distinguishes traditional and modern types of action is the question of emotions and power. In other words, the key lies in the way we receive the action and react to it. *Rampant* focuses on maximising the power of action.

HYUN Bin and you previously worked together on *Confidential Assignment*.

In creating the character of Lee Cheung, I was very much

influenced by the informal, everyday aspects of HYUN Bin. I wanted to ensure that this new character would give the actor a chance to show a side of him he's never shared before.

The role of KIM Ja-jun, Lee Cheung's enemy, went to JANG Dong-gun.

As soon as he saw the scenario, he asked 'Why are you offering me this role?' (laughs). I wanted to avoid shaping KIM Ja-jun into a fragmentary villain that's why I chose to portray him as a multi-faceted character instead. I have no interest in characters that are born evil. What fascinates me is the question of how and why a person becomes evil. I hope KIM Ja-jun is seen as an extension or an evolution of CHA Gi-sung, the character played by KIM Joo-hyuk in *Confidential Assignment*.

With this background of political strife and epidemic outbreak, can we expect to still find both emotional and entertaining elements in the movie?

When the planning stage of a new project starts, I consciously avoid looking at any reference materials so as not to be influenced by them. With *Rampant*, my goal is to present an entertaining film telling the story of people during the Joseon era who are fighting against night demons and work on resolving the disastrous situation they are in. I hope the film conveys the spirit of those people rather than simply showing how they overcome hardships. Rather than a film that analyzes some grand discourse, I hope to make, with this new ensemble of actors, an exhilarating action film.

by KIM Hyun-su (Film Journalist) | photographed by OH Kye-ohk

P O I N T

Joseon era's 'Avengers'-like team action

We expect to find in *Rampant* some impressive action sequences with characters fighting against mysterious creatures known as 'night demons'. YI Chung will prove himself a man of distinguished military skills and the joint effort of his crew that gathers PARK Eul-young (JO Woo-jin), Deok-hee (LEE Sun-bin), Monk Dae-gil (CHO Dal-hwan), Hak-soo (JEONG Man-sik) and Man-bo (PARK Jin-woo) will add to the fun.



WOO Min-ho

THE DRUG KING

CAST SONG Kang-ho, CHO Jung-suk, Doona BAE

DISTRIBUTOR Showbox

The Korean Evils of the 1970s

The latest film from WOO Min-ho, director of *Inside Men* (2015), is based on the true story of LEE Doo-sam, an infamous drug dealer in Busan in the 1970s. The film chronicles the journey of the man known as 'the drug king', whose pursuit of power and wealth eventually brings about his downfall. The term 'drug king' inevitably calls to mind Pablo Escobar, but LEE's story differs from that of the Columbian drug cartel leader. Against the backdrop of the Korean Dream of the 1970s, the film depicts a man who dreams of rapidly making a fortune but perishes in the end. SONG Kang-ho becomes an apostle of the Korean evils, which are illustrated here in an original way.

Where did your idea for *The Drug King* come from?

Apparently, men like LEE Doo-sam really existed in the early 1970s. When the Japanese government imposed strict laws against drugs – with capital punishment for meth production, for example – Busan became the perfect transit point for drug trafficking due to its proximity with the archipelago. What grew out of this was a production with methods like those employed by an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), whereby drugs were manufactured and then re-exported to Japan. One day, I found by chance in an old newspaper a photo taken the moment the drug king was arrested. It showed him being hauled out of his holiday home in Millak Neighborhood, Busan, with soldiers and police officers standing outside the door holding carabines. This image was the starting point for the film.

Was he really called 'drug king' at that time? The film must have required a lot of research to provide the background to this story based on real events and real people.

There is much more material about this than I would have expected. I travelled to Busan and met the police officers who oversaw the case, as well as the other people involved. I even found a lot of old newspapers in library archives. And indeed, the expression 'drug king' was used in the headlines. How could there even be a drug king under the Yusin Constitution (marked by the excessive centralization of powers in then Korean president PARK Chung-hee)? At first, I found it too difficult to believe. However, as I researched further, I realized that far from preventing it, this period was what made it possible. At a time when people were striving for a good life, they would turn a blind

eye to all sorts of evil deeds.

Despite being an evil drug dealer, LEE Doo-sam follows his own logic to provide for his family, which is characteristic of the 1970s.

I didn't realise it while shooting, but only later when I began editing the film; the drug king wasn't much of a king after all. In the film, there are hardly any benefits he can enjoy. Even after he becomes the drug king of his time, he submits to power, gets beaten up by others and suffers the scorn of his family. I was born in 1971, and that was when my father's generation was at its prime. They, too, lived life to the fullest and struggled against many hardships. Therefore, it'd be unfair of me to deem the entire period terrible.

One aspect for which there are many expectations is the portrayal of LEE Doo-sam by SONG Kang-ho (*Snowpiercer* [2013], *A Taxi Driver* [2017]).

From the start, when asked who I would rather see in the role of LEE Doo-sam, I would always give the same answer. SONG Kang-ho is definitely the kind of actor that all directors would like to work with at least once. During the past ten years, he has mostly played characters who are aware of the times they're living in. However, I wanted to bring out the SONG Kang-ho that we saw in his early works. LEE Doo-sam does not awaken, but expects the people to reflect on their own epoch through him. In designing the lead character, I aimed for the story not to have the dark themes of works such as the television series *Narcos* and the films *The Godfather* and *Scarface*. That was my main focus. I was very concerned by how I could create a typically Korean character and genuine feelings that wouldn't be constrained by the limits of the genre.

LEE Doo-sam involves his cousins in his drug trafficking, which brings another interesting aspect of the film in that we get to see how drugs are made and how the business operates.

The 'drug business' is essentially a family business. Because there's no one they can trust, drug dealers usually get their families involved, as proven by most records. Instead of taking the matter too seriously, I approached their feats from a fun and extravagant angle.

Please tell us more about the overall tone and rhythm of the film.

The basic concept was to convey the splendor of the 1970s. The world of drug trafficking was nothing like that of



The Drug King

ordinary people, it was clearly made of excesses. I've been bold in my use of colours. I ruled out the tones usually employed in Korean films to represent the 1970s and made all colours a little bit brighter. In addition to the photography and the art direction, the costumes had to be flashy to match the colours of the background. I think I've pushed it to such an extent that it will remind people of the Hollywood films of the 1970s and they will wonder if Korea really was like that back then. In contrast to these vivid colours, I chose to highlight the film's classic elements by shooting with only one camera. It had an incredible impact on the concentration.

by LEE Hwa-jung (Film Journalist) | photographed by SON Hong-joo

P O I N T

LEE Doo-sam's House, a Hotbed of Evil Doings

From the outside, LEE Doo-sam's house looks like an ordinary two-story house. However, it functions as a base for producing drugs and circulating dirty money. The director WOO Min-ho explains, 'During my research trip, I visited the actual holiday home in Millak Neighborhood. The place actually felt like the safehouse in Gungjeong Neighborhood [where Korean president PARK Chung-hee was assassinated in 1979 during a dinner by his security chief].' Located in the basement of the house are LEE's drug factory and safe. On the second floor, a space has been created for his own pleasure. The roses in the garden are used to cover up the unpleasant smell caused by drug manufacturing.

KANG Hyoung-chul

SWING KIDS

CAST DOH Kyung-soo,
PARK Hye-soo,
Jared Grimes, OH Jeong-se

DISTRIBUTOR Next Entertainment World

Defining History through Dance, A Reading of the Korean War Ideologies



Director KANG Hyoung-chul has been releasing films every three years, from *Scandal Makers* in 2008, *Sunny* in 2011, to *Tazza-The Hidden Card* in 2014. Although his filmography is diverse in genres and themes, his interest for music and dance was always an omnipresent component of his stories. With *Swing Kids*, the director took a chance to really explore this inclination of his. Set in 1951 at the Geoje Prisoner Of War (POW) Camp, KANG Hyoung-chul's new film will tell the story of RO Gi-su (DOH Kyung-soo), a young North Korean soldier who dreams of becoming a tap dancer, and through him, will show us the truth behind the illness of "ideology" from which our societies suffer.

Your film depicts the story of an amateur dance company named Swing Kids, in the midst of the Korean War. What drove you to this story?

I originally wanted to make a film about disco, but it didn't really work out. I was also very drawn to the conflicts between North and South Korea and that's when someone introduced me to an original musical called *Ro Gi-su*. I thought I'd be able to combine those two stories I wanted to tell in one movie. The dancing was there, the relationship between North and South Korea as well. The captives of the Geoje POW Camp wage the same ideological war. Through

this movie, I wanted to ask why, in the name of an ideology, our country must live in separation, and what causes naive people to become villainous.

In *Scandal Makers* and *Sunny*, comedy was your main tool to move your audiences but your approach to drama is also very unique. I am very curious to see how such a heavy subject like the Korean War can be incorporated in your project.

The Korean war was indeed a huge tragedy. Many wanted to express themselves through dance during those dark times but they weren't able to. The character of RO Gi-su

falls in love with tap dancing, but when caught dancing, he gets accused of being a communist. Dancing and singing are an inherent instinct and right of humans. How could an ideology be so strong that it would ask us to suppress our instincts? In this film, I wanted to portray the “ideology” as the ultimate villain. The movie revolves around the war, but it's main topic remains dancing. Looking at this period of history through the prism of dance, you'll be able to acknowledge the comedy within the tragedy. I believe dance will stand out as the most instinctive form of entertainment.

Tap dancing must have been important for the shooting.

I drew the moves one by one in the storyboard, but the camera technique wasn't as important as how well the actors executed the moves. We practiced it for a year. They weren't very good at first but have now mastered it to the point of being able to participate in talent shows. (laughs)

You had to reenact the Korean War for this movie and worked with D.O.P KIM Jee-yong whose filmography includes *The Age of Shadows* and *The Fortress* for this purpose. As he is an experienced cinematographer for period films, we're looking forward to this collaboration.

I was aiming at reproducing the style of old color photographs. While working on the colorimetry, KIM Jee-yong spent a lot of time trying to find the right color balance and tone. I was already a great admirer of his work, but I think I've now found a lifetime production partner. I've never entrusted that much to a Director of Photography like I did to KIM Jee-yong this time. I was always looking forward to seeing what angle he would choose next.

DOH Kyung-soo, who plays RO Gi-su, is an idol star. That must have helped for the dancing parts. Did you always have him in mind for this role?

I actually did not know he was the vocalist from EXO and was oblivious at that time (laughs). Anyway, tap dancing is slightly different from other types of dance but in spite of that, he was physically fit to learn and picked it up pretty fast. He didn't even have to use a stand-in and was able to execute even the most difficult moves himself.

How did you choreograph the dance parts?

The actors not only had to tap dance well, they also had



Swing Kids

to act well. I auditioned many international actors through Skype, and many of them actually appear in the film. Out of them all, Jared Grimes got the role of Jackson, an African-American sergeant who creates *Swing Kids*. He's quite famous in Broadway and a great dancer but he didn't have much experience on camera, which made me worry at first. Prior to the shoot, I gave him many explanations on the film and we even exchanged letters. Now, even Korean food seems to be to his liking. (laughs)

You're quite familiar with showcasing a new side of your actors. I think actress PARK Hye-soo is a good example in this film.

It was important for the female lead to have an important role and I actually modeled her character after my grandmother. I looked into my grandmother's childhood days with the desire to give her a second youth. Back in those days, Korean women had to go through many hardships, some being widowed and having to be the breadwinners in the family, putting their dreams aside. YANG Pan-rae, the character played by PARK Hye-soo, is the symbol of that humanity.

by LEE Hwa-jung (Film Journalist) | photographed by OH Gye-ok

P O I N T

How Far Will You Go for Licensed Music?

Music plays a pivotal role in *Swing Kids*. Director KANG Hyoung-chul said, "I did not only use music from that period, but also other songs that would come to my mind." For instance, he selected pop music from the 1980s, David Bowie and The Beatles. Despite knowing that purchasing the licenses for the songs would be a hassle, he gave it a try and stubbornly worked to get all of them. In the end, it took him over a year to get the copyrights sorted out.



KIM Byung-woo

TAKE POINT

CAST HA Jung-woo, LEE Sun-kyun

DISTRIBUTOR CJ Entertainment

What would happen if a Second Korean War Broke Out?

Take Point is set in a future where North and South Korea are at war. However, the film doesn't revolve around those political issues and grabs your attention for a very different reason. Could you imagine a military operation taking place behind closed doors? What if someone, neither Korean nor foreigner, was involved in this incident? Following his debut commercial film *The Terror, LIVE* (2013), director KIM Byung-woo comes back with another story about an individual pushed to the edge.

Most of us are not familiar with Private Military Companies (PMC) on which your film is based. Where did you first get this idea?

The idea of a second Korean war in a near future came to me first and I started off from there. If such a hypothetical situation were to occur, I believe it would be a lot different from what happened in the past, and so I started thinking about what kind of things could actually happen. That's when I came across PMCs, organizations that are not part of the official army but appeared from the union of capitalism and the government. In Korea, people might not be very familiar with the concept, but there have already

been many instances where they have been deployed in the US, the Middle East and Europe, and that's why I thought it would be great material for a story. In addition, when we discuss the possibility of an outbreak of war in Korea, we always assume that the US or China may be involved and so I also took such elements into consideration when writing the story.

After your feature commercial debut, this film will be your second film with HA Jung-woo.

After the release of *The Terror, LIVE*, I went on a trip to

Iceland and that's when he got in touch with me. He told me he had an idea and wanted to work on it together after my return. Back then, he gave me only one clue: underground bunker. I took this and developed the background around the concept of a second Korean War conflict, that's how I started working on the script.

HA Jung-woo plays the Korean leader of a global PMC named Black Lizard and LEE Sun-kyun takes the role of a North Korean army surgeon. It will mark the first time we see these two together on screen.

The character of Ahab really came to life thanks to HA Jung-woo's acting. His performance was excellent, but he was especially good with the English lines as well as focusing on the character's traits and adjusting his acting along the way. I casted LEE Sun-kyun because HA Jung-woo and he have very different images. It was very important for the two characters to contrast with each other when they first meet and I thought casting them both would be a good way to express their respective personalities.

It looks like you had to research not only military science, but also international affairs.

When I first got this idea, I had only heard of PMC and didn't know anything on how they run or what they are really like. I read every book there is on the conflict between North and South Korea, as well as publications on the North Korean nuclear weapon crisis. There were also many books written by Japanese and Chinese authors. As this film isn't about a special event, it took quite a while to get all the research done prior to writing.

Your set must have looked like that of a war movie.

It took us a very long time to shoot. (laughs) We had 79 shooting days over a period of four months and, except for a couple of them, everything was done in a studio. Because there are actually diverse locations within the bunker, we had to build over 10 different sets for this film.

Could you talk more about your approach to filming the action scenes for this movie?

In most war movies, the combat scenes show the shooters and the persons being shot at, over and over again. In PMC, everything is seen through the protagonist's eyes. The audience can only see what Ahab is allowed to see, but that



Take Point

doesn't mean the film is shot only from his point-of-view. It will simply limit itself to the spaces where Ahab is. Although the genre itself is interesting, the reason I made this choice was to show Ahab's character in the best way possible.

***Take Point's* story unfolds in a bunker, a restricted space, which reminds us of *The Terror, LIVE*.**

I gave it a lot of thought and decided that from now on I would do what I'm best at. I actually had many regrets with *The Terror, LIVE* and in order to not repeat the same mistakes again, I worked hard on this opportunity to make a better film. ㉠

by KIM Hyun-su (Film Journalist) | photographed by OH Gye-ok

P O I N T

As If You Were on the Battlefield

In order for the audience to be captivated, director KIM Byung-woo developed his concept around the idea of "experiencing the action". The cameras of this huis-clos were angled in a way that makes you feel like you're experiencing the combat in real-time. For other action scenes that were not shot from Ahab's point of view, the director used drones and diverse camera angles to intensify the sense of realism.



Korea, a Place Familiar yet Unfamiliar

Visiting the Locations of *Little Forest*,
Be With You and *Black Panther*

Films reinvent real locations through their stories by showing them in a familiar yet novel way. Some landscapes can appear more 'real' than life and be remembered forever. We visited the locations of three recent films shot in Korea and realized that these places hold many stories, and that's without counting those told in the movies.



Little Forest

The Four Seasons in Korea, North Gyeongsang Province, in *Little Forest*

The first location we visited was North Gyeongsang Province where *Little Forest* was filmed. Directed by YIM Soon-rye and starring KIM Tae-ri, the film is an adaptation of the Japanese manga series *Little Forest*. The title is the translation of 'Komori', the Japanese name of the village in the manga where the story takes place. The village itself felt like a small forest, and so are the Gunwi and Uiseong Counties in North Gyeongsang Province where the Korean version of *Little Forest* was filmed.

The stone wall-lined road shown in the autumnal scenes of *Little Forest* is located in Hanbam Village, Gunwi County. Created in 950 AD after a scholar settled in this area, the village appears in the background as the camera follows from behind Hye-won (played by KIM Tae-ri) walking along the moss-covered stone wall. "You can tell we're deep into autumn when candied chestnuts taste this good". The scene perfectly fits this line, as it conveys a feeling of satisfaction while allowing us to take a deep breath. This wall-lined path that stretches without interruption along the village makes for a fascinating sight. A narrow alley of the low but hilly village seems to have formed a stone wall just like that. As high as an adult's chest, these walls must have required more than a few stones, and stone is common in this area. The Seokguram Grotto (a Buddhist cave hermitage) that lies on Mt. Palgong was constructed in 493 AD, two centuries

66

A small town's four seasons is the dominating theme in the film

Little Forest. 99

before the one located near Gyeongju. The Grotto is a 15 min walk from the stone wall.

Right before the scene on the path along the stone wall, Hye-won and Eun-sook are sitting, facing each other, in front of a shop called 'Train Station Store'. Eun-sook challenges Jae-ha to a fair and square duel, and Hye-won is about to take up the challenge when suddenly Jae-ha passes them by with another woman, who turns out to be his ex-girlfriend. They broke up when Jae-ha decided to move back to his village. 'I am just dropping by as it was on my way', as she says. However, this is not the kind of place where people simply drop by. "Her skin is so fair, I'm no match for her", Eun-sook laments to Hye-won. This scene where Jae-ha is sending off his ex-girlfriend was shot around Hwabon Station. Since the Train Station Store is right in front of Hwabon Station, it's a must for anyone visiting the locations of *Little Forest*. Hwabon Station makes you feel like you've been brought back in time. A notice states that there are only 50 trains a day, and you will have to spend KRW 1,000 (approx. USD 1) to visit inside if you don't have a boarding pass. Hwabon Station's most famous landmark, which also stands out in *Little Forest*, is the water tower, built at the end of the 1930s, that was used to refill steam

locomotives with water.

There's a scene in *Little Forest* where Hye-won is riding a bike against the backdrop of a spring forest laden with cornelian cherry. In fact, Uiseong becomes every year a famous tourist attraction when the Cornelian cherry flowers of the hundred thousand trees planted along the mountain paths of 'Sansuyu Village' are in full bloom (from mid-March to early April). Due to this abundance, you can witness the crimson landscapes until spring as many flowers will have overcome the rain and the wind. To put it in a way similar to the observations made in *Little Forest*, you can determine it's still winter if you see the red hues on the Cornelian cherry trees, but spring has come if they are yellow. As said in the film, you need to realize the beauty of patience in order to appreciate the most delicious meal, and you have to wait in order to recognize the golden beauty of the ephemeral spring.

The Country Landscapes of Yeongdong County, North Chungcheong Province, in *Be With You*

The landscapes in *Be With You* are similar to those in *Little Forest*. Directed by LEE Jang-hoon and starring SON Ye-jin and SO Ji-sub, this film begins with Soo-a passing away, leaving behind a husband and a son. She promises to return in a year, when it rains. Then, on the first day of the monsoon, the father and the son discover a woman lying on the road. She looks just like Soo-a and she has lost her memory. The man hides Soo-a's death from her and claims he is her husband.

The forest seen in the film is used to stitch together destined love, family bonds and a dose of fantastic that makes

desperate wishes come true. Due to the forest and the rain, the scenery seems somewhat mystical. This film was shot in the small village of Sangchon in Yeongdong County, North Chungcheong Province, which also appeared in the film *The Way Home* (2002).

Thirty minutes of the film are set in Sangchon, while the film's main location, Woo-jin's house, is located on a remote mountain in the outskirts of Sangchon. A farm house was converted into the studio of the protagonist and decorated as if it was a handicraft workshop in Seoul. A train station also appears in *Be With You*: Simpo-ri Station. This now-closed whistle stop is where the father and the son find the woman on a rainy day, but please be warned if you intend to visit this place that you will be met by the typical gloom that these abandoned sites contain.

A Futuristic City, Busan in *Black Panther*

Finally, let's visit *Black Panther*'s location in Busan, which people online have started calling 'Busan Panther'. While the two films discussed above presented quaint Korean landscapes and the beauty of nature, the locales found in *Black Panther* are more 'likely' places for a superhero to appear; the Busan we see in the film, with its nights filled with neon signs and the car chase scene, recall a futuristic city similar to the likes of *Blade Runner*. Most of the filming had to be done late at night, like the one that took place on Gwangan Bridge on March 9th, 2017 (since this location boasts the heaviest traffic volume in Busan). This location, as well as Jagalchi Market, flashes by during an intense car chase scene. In an interview, director Ryan Coogler said that

Be With You





Black Panther

he considers Busan as an ideal shooting location that is full of energy, and this ‘futuristic city combining modernity and traditions’, as pointed out by Coogler, has solidified Busan as a memorable ‘scene stealer’ despite its brief appearance. If you are planning a tour of the *Black Panther* locations in Busan, we recommend you to go for the night hours, when the flashy neon signs pierce through the darkness, since these particular locations can only be observed when you take your time. Or you could do like the protagonist in the car chase and rush through Jagalchi Market as fast as you can, but you may be mistaken as a pickpocket or get an earful from a market vendor if you happen to crash into their stall. *Black Panther* is a rediscovery of Busan through the eyes of an outsider. From a distance, it’s not so different from other locations of action movies shot in Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur or Dubai. However, Koreans that recognize the snack parlors and hospital signs in Busan can feel an odd sense of exoticism and laugh at it. Busan has been serving for some time as an entry point for international film professionals to discover Korean films thanks to its international film festival. While visiting Busan, these film specialists always comment on the city’s potential to stage melodramas or action films, what with its mountains, its maritime landscape, its traditional markets like Jagalchi, and the rows of houses at the foot of the hills. With many local government agencies such as the City of Busan working hard to promote more film productions to come to their regions, you can expect in the future a much wider choice of places immortalized in movies.

by Dahyeh Lee (Film Journalist)

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The "Queen of Melodrama" Who Stepped Up Her Game to Become a Great Actor

SON Ye-jin

Every period of Korean cinema had its 'Queen of Tears'. Prior to the advent of the industry system as we know today, melodramas have long been the powerhouse of Korean films, and female celebrities ruled the box office. Petite and delicate looking actresses who could burst into a flood of tears on command were the norm. While the 1960s had MOON Hee (*Love Me Once Again*), the 1970s had AN In-suk (*Heavenly homecoming to Stars*), the 1980s KANG Soor-yeon (*The Surrogate Woman*), and the 1990s JEON Do-yeon (*A Promise*). All of them embodied youth and innocence, and their ability to cry right on cue were determining factors in measuring their acting prowess.

During the 2000s, SON Ye-jin was called the 'Queen of Tears', along with her other nickname 'Queen of Melodrama'. However, such a title wouldn't do her justice. Her filmography spans across many different genres where she has had the opportunity to prove her talent, as shown by the acting prizes she grabbed at the three major film awards in Korea. Furthermore, she's one of the few actresses who is bankable, in a commercial film market that has become dominated by men since the 1990s.

Her career can be largely divided into three stages: the first, characterized by her tender characters, with works such as *Lover's Concerto* (2002), *Classic* (2003) and *A Moment to remember* (2004); the second, during which she challenged herself by moving to various genres, with *Open City* (2008), *My Wife Got Married* (2008) and *Spellbound* (2011); and the third stage during which her acting was recognized in works such as *The Pirates* (2014), *The Truth Beneath* (2016), *The Last Princess* (2016) and *Be With You*.

During her first stage, she proved to be a perfect fit for the romance genre. In the beginning of each of these films, her character would always appear cheerful as she would go through the first days of a new relationship, but she would inevitably be confronted with a tragic ending, a contrast that



made her roles all the more heartbreaking. Although she presented versatility, going from passion to tragedy, it seemed like she was limited to a specific genre.

The second stage was a period where her girlish image gave way to her unexpected seductive side, with an emphasis on women who would take their own decisions and bear the consequences. She tried comedy, crime thriller and action, overthrowing on the way her innocent image to establish a stronger one.

In her third and current stage she has solidified her position as a serious actress through unique roles, with a lot of heavyweight films. She has taken roles that notably include a great action heroine, a hysterical incarnation of revenge and a true historical figure who suffered through the tragedy of times to finally return to melodrama as a more mature 'Queen of Melodrama'.

It's rare for sweet and innocent icons to later become recognized in earnest as some of the best actors in Korea. This actress who now possesses both talent and popularity is faced with the task of making her most outstanding work to date. ㉠

by JEONG Min-ah (Film Critic) | photographed by CHOI Sung-young

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RECENTLY SUPPORTED PROJECTS



OKJA
American feature film,
2016



SENSE8
American TV series,
2014-2016



MARRY ME, OR NOT
(必娶女人)
Taiwanese TV series,
2015



TO THE FORE
(破風)
Chinese feature film,
2015



AVENGERS:
AGE OF ULTRON
American feature film,
2014



AMERICA'S NEXT
TOP MODEL CYCLE 21
American TV series,
2014

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Projects



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Co-
production
Begins



ONLINE BIZ MATCHING FOR INT'L CO-PRODUCTION

NEWS



PUBLICATIONS



The screenshot displays the Korean Film Biz Zone website. The top navigation bar includes links for HOME, JOIN, LOGIN, REGISTER, and a language selector (KOR/ENG). The main menu features DATABASE, STATISTICS, NEW&REPORTS, **KO-PRODUCTION**, and PUBLICATION. The Ko-Production section is highlighted with a green callout bubble.

Latest News

- I CAN SPEAK Receives Amnesty International Award**
NA Moon-Hee, only had to wait 56 years to win her first Blue Dragon Film Award for lead actress, but she may already want to look into buying a bigger trophy case. On November 26, it was announced that...
- Starring OH Ji-ho and NAM Kyu-ri, HISTORY OF JEA--**
Production recently began on History of Jea (translated 1985). The indie film began shooting on December 10th at the Dec 11, 2017.
- VR Melodrama MEET THE MEMORIES - FIRST LOVE--**
Dec 11, 2017

Biz-Matching Project

- Jeonju Lands on 25 Coolest Film Festivals List**
KIM Dae-hwan's second feature The First Lap has won the Best Emerging Director prize from the 16th Jeonju International Film Festival... May 31, 2017
- THE NUT JOB 2 Bows at 2nd Place in US Box Office**
May 31, 2017

Ko-Production

- Companies
- People
- Co-production Agreements
- Case Study

Korean Films Now

- The Swindlers**
Crime | 117min | Showbox Corp.
Director : JANG Chang-won
Cast : Hyun Bin, YOO Ji-tae, BAE Sung-won, PARK Sung-won
Trailer >
- Forgotten**
South Korea
- Pororo, Dinosaur Island Adventure**
South Korea
- Mary and The Witch's Flower**
Japan
- Murder on the Orient Express**
US

Box Office | IPTV/VOD

Rank	Title	Box Office
1	The Swindlers	\$3,173,371
2	Forgotten	\$2,334,569
3	Pororo, Dinosaur Island Adventure	\$2,103,962
4	Mary and The Witch's Flower	\$1,934,653
5	Murder on the Orient Express	\$1,090,788

Reports & Infographics

- Amazing Vincent!**
Loving Vincent, the world's first, fully oil painted feature film, surpassed 200...
Dec 05, 2017
- DC vs Marvel: Superhero Battles at Box Office**
Marvel and DC have been long time rivals in the comic book industry in the US...
Nov 28, 2017



KOREAN FILM DB



BOXOFFICE

Your Window into Korean Films Gets a Makeover!